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ABSTRACT

There has been concern in New Zealand about whether the level and pace of licensing and chartering Pacific Islands early childhood centers (PIECCs) are sufficient to meet current needs. This study identified obstacles to the attainment of licensed and chartered status as assessed by key informants from agencies working with Pacific Islands Language Groups and PIECCs, representatives of the national Pacific Islands early childhood associations, and representatives of licensed centers or centers working towards licensing. Findings indicated that agencies viewed funding as the primary barrier; viewed national organizations and centers as becoming better informed about early childhood education; and identified centers' almost total reliance on government funding and ability to sustain licensed status as challenges. Pacific Island national associations identified difficulties related to funding, parent involvement, and rapidly changing policies and regulations; noted the importance of Pacific Island agency personnel; and identified the challenge in providing further immersion in Pacific Island languages. Key informants from PIECCs identified barriers and challenges, including funding, relationships with families, and lack of qualified staff. Differences between licensed and unlicensed programs included the ability to extend services to all-day provision, ability to train and pay staff, improved community status of the programs, and increased access to quality services. (Four appendices include information on definitions of terminology used by the Ministry of Education, interview questions, and feedback on the draft report. Contains 19 references.) (KB)

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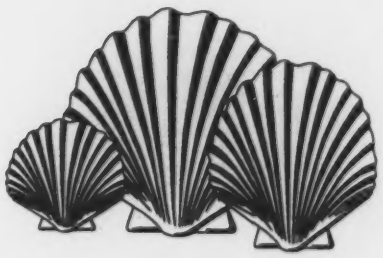
PROGRESS TOWARDS LICENSING AND CHARTERING PACIFIC ISLANDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES IN NEW ZEALAND



DIANE L MARA

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PROGRESS TOWARDS

LICENSING AND CHARTERING

PACIFIC ISLANDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES

IN NEW ZEALAND

DIANE L MARA

New Zealand Council for Educational Research
Wellington
1998

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has been concern from a number of sources about whether the level and pace of licensing and chartering of Pacific Islands early childhood centres (PIECCs) is sufficient to meet current needs, given the present demand for access to quality early childhood provision. The process of licensing and chartering centres and its attainment is an indicator to Pacific Islands parents and communities that groups have met Ministry of Education standards. Attainment of minimum acceptable standards is also important for the Government of the day. Meeting licensing standards means the Government can be confident that an acceptable standard of education and care is available. It is of high economic, social, and educational interest to all interested parties and stakeholders, that any obstacles impeding the progress towards attainment of licensed and chartered status by PIECCs be identified. Such obstacles need to be addressed without compromising the level of acceptable standards.

This study is an attempt to define this identification process. The current situation and policies are outlined. The requirements for the licensing of centres in terms of property and trained staff are described.

The participants of this study included not only key informants from all the agencies which work with Pacific Islands Language Groups (PILGs) and PIECCs, but also representatives of the national Pacific Islands early childhood associations; key individuals in the development and support of PILGs and PIECCs; and representatives of centres themselves that were either already licensed and could describe the process, or centres that are currently working towards licensing.

Key informants from agencies were asked to report on their respective roles in relation to licensing PIECCs; the successes to date of their agency services or support; the challenges centres faced in becoming licensed and chartered; and how the agencies themselves could be more responsive and supportive in the licensing process. Main findings from the agencies included the following:

- All agencies acknowledged that policies and initiatives implemented since 1989 and particularly since 1996 had resulted in more PIECCs being licensed and chartered. Funding was seen by most agencies as the primary barrier to licensing and chartering, not only in terms of buildings and facilities that meet health and safety requirements but also for purchasing resources, employing staff, and undertaking ongoing professional development.
- Agencies saw evidence that national organisations and centres are becoming better informed about early childhood education.
- Parents and communities were paid tribute by several agencies for their commitment, hard work, and unwavering belief in the need for PIECCs. The supportive and key role of the churches was also acknowledged.
- The quality of advice received by centres from a range of agencies, associations, and individuals has contributed towards helping centres reach licensing and chartering status.
- Informants in the agencies detailed what they saw as future challenges for licensed centres: concern for centres' almost total reliance on ongoing Government funding to remain viable, and for their ability to sustain licensed status and compliance with legislative requirements, particularly in their first year of operation.
- Informants commented that a more precise focus on quality in PIECCs is timely, as has happened with other early childhood providers.

The Pacific Islands national associations which were consulted for this study were asked to outline their main contributions and involvements in the licensing and chartering processes (including training); the achievements of their associations; the barriers to licensing and chartering processes; the factors that have been of assistance to licensing and chartering; and lastly, to give their opinions on the challenges for the centres in the future. Main perspectives and experiences from the associations were:

- The Pacific Islands associations acknowledged that there are now many more centres licensed and chartered. They noted the developing confidence in, credibility and awareness of, and information about, the importance of early childhood education in their own communities (although there is still further to go); that the associations are continuing to be successful at keeping on despite setbacks (including not winning contracts or extra funding); and that, despite the immense time and resource commitment required for licensing and chartering, centres are achieving this status in very difficult economic times for most Pacific Islands families and children.
- The associations identified a number of difficulties that exist prior to licensing and chartering, and after licensing, for groups and centres. These included funding; fund-raising; adherence to regulations and requirements; gaining and sustaining parent involvement and commitment; issues about property/premises, ongoing training, and professional development; receiving conflicting information from agencies; and policies and regulations. In particular, policies and regulations change so rapidly associations feel it is hard to keep up with them, let alone meet them. Some associations felt they were not always consulted or considered in these changes.
- The associations reported that the centres have only achieved what they have so far because of the assistance and support they have received: total commitment by parents and communities; trained and qualified Pacific Islands staff and support people to lead/manage the process; committed and inclusive leadership at all levels; and the level of funding and support.
- Having Pacific Islands personnel in the agencies, especially those who can speak Pacific Islands languages and can explain the required processes clearly, has also been of great assistance. Despite the present and ongoing challenges, the key informants from the associations reported that they anticipated a positive future if many of the ongoing issues are faced and strategies developed to address them, for example, to ensure that all the Pacific Islands associations stay viable, credible, and work together co-operatively.
- Another challenge is reaching higher levels of immersion in Pacific Islands languages—how to get quality in that aspect of their provisions, and to define and work towards quality "for ourselves, in our own terms".

Key informants from licensed and unlicensed centres were asked to describe the barriers and challenges to licensing (both pre- and post-licensing); useful supports and services; the differences between being licensed and unlicensed; and their present and future needs.

They identified similar main issues which included:

- funding for premises and facilities
- working relationships with hosts/owners of premises
- working with families to bring them along with the group
- lack of trained, qualified staff

- initial lack of confidence when faced with all the requirements, regulations, and processes of licensing and chartering.

Centres reported significant differences between being licensed and unlicensed. Unlicensed centres contemplated what changes would occur when they became licensed and chartered. Differences included:

- Greater levels of awareness about learning, purposes, and direction by parents and early childhood educators.
- The ability to extend service to all-day provision, so that when licensed they could give better quality service to parents and children.
- Staff at licensed centres are trained and paid for their work (unlicensed centres mentioned having trained and qualified staff in their group who were currently working for no pay which they thought was "not right").
- Several informants reported that "improved" status in the eyes of the parents and the Pacific Islands communities was very important. Licensed centres are known to be "proper" early childhood centres because they have clear guidelines of what is expected and accountability to parents and the communities, which is very important.
- Several teachers mentioned increased access by parents, families, and children to quality early childhood education as an important outcome of being licensed and chartered. The centre informants described the kinds of tasks that lie before them and their challenges and needs for the future.

A small-scale study such as this one has its limitations. Many of the issues, concerns, challenges, and successes highlighted require further investigation and "unpacking". It is important that a wider historical perspective be taken when the development of Pacific Islands early childhood education is examined, and in particular when considering the processes of licensing and chartering Pacific Islands centres.

Behind the data collected, however, and the work and commitment by all of the Pacific Islands communities and organisations, lies the context of the low socioeconomic realities of Pacific Islands families and the very high cultural and educational aspirations these families and parents have for their children. The reported barriers to licensing and chartering in this study must be placed in the context of these 2 key factors—low resources and high aspirations—if the identified challenges are to be appropriately and effectively met by all the agencies, associations, centres, families, and communities involved in Pacific Islands early childhood education.

PIECCs are like many other early childhood providers in that they experience a turnover of families and children. As well, they are still a relatively new group of providers compared with other early childhood education services which have a longer history of involvement and experience upon which to draw. This study reveals how, through funding, resourcing, and networking agencies and organisations, this experience is growing.

The licensing and chartering processes are facilitated by a number of different agencies (and different sections of these agencies) and organisations. Because of these complexities, only a very small number of individuals have a complete overview of all PIECCs—their programmes, challenges, and aspirations for the future. Themes arising from this study indicate that more effective communication of information and co-ordination would probably ameliorate this lack of overview.

It needs to be remembered that current ongoing policy changes, links between research and

policy, recent policy work on qualifications and the development of quality indicators, and professional development contracts all impact on the development of Pacific Islands early childhood services.

The report concludes with a discussion of common perspectives and views shared by agencies, Pacific Islands organisations, and the centres. A number of differences are also noted. Participants' views on quality, choice, and access are also outlined.

Some future directions for the processes of licensing and chartering and some suggestions for future research include:

- ☐ a larger study with a more representative sample of centres, and
- ☐ a more in-depth examination of a range of issues raised in the present report, for example:
  - property
  - the adequacy of funding for equity
  - access to provisions, management, and training
  - professional support
  - special education needs and services for Pacific Islands children and families
  - governance and statutory obligations, regulations, and compliance
  - the sharing of support and advice
  - accountability.

Condensed versions of this summary in 4 Pacific Islands languages can be found on the following pages. These were provided by the Translation Service of the Department of Internal Affairs in Wellington.

Tala i le Aga'i i Luma o le Fa'alaiseneina ma Tūsia Fa'avae o A'oga Amata Fa'ata'ita'i a Atu Motu o le Pasefika i Totonu o Niu Sila

O le tala tūsia tūto'atasi lenei mai le Fono a Niu Sila mo Su'esu'ega o Tulaga tau A'oa'oga, i le sa'ili'iliina po'o ā tonu ni tulaga aga'i i luma ua fa'atino e a'oga'amatafa'ata'ita'i mo le fa'alaiseneina ma tūsia fa'avae. Ua aofia ai saunoaga ma taofi mai i:

- matāgaluega o lo'o lagolagaoina ma tautuaina a'oga amata fa'ata'ita'i a atu motu o le pasefika (ua aofia ai le Matāgaluega o Pūlega o A'oa'oga, Matāgaluega o le Atina'ega o A'oa'oga Amata Fa'ata'ita'i, Ofisa o Aiaiga o Tulaga tau A'oa'oga);
- Asosi a a'oga amata fa'ata'ita'i a Atu Motu o le Pasefika i le atunu'u lautele, ma i latou o lo'o saunia tulaga mo le a'oa'oina o faia'oga
- aofiaga to'aitiiti a faia'oga, mātua/tagata a nu'u ma pule o a'oga amata fa'ata'ita'i a Samoa, Atu Kuki, Niuē ma Tonga.

Sa tu'uina atu se lafo fa'atū i nei matāgaluega uma, aofiaga fa'apotopoto ma tagata ta'itao'atasi, ina ia fa'amatalaina mai ni faiga e fa'atinoina ai tulaga tau laisene ma tūsiga fa'avae i lo latou lava iloa, atoa ma tulaga loulouā o lo'o fa'afeagai ma a'oga amata fa'ata'ita'i. Sa fa'aalia mai e aofiaga o tagata uma sa fa'atalanoaina lenei matā'upu, fa'apea, o tulaga fa'apitoa e lua ua avea ma punitiaga o le maua o tōfiga fa'alaisene: o tulaga tau fa'afoeina o tupe/fa'atupeina/fa'atamāoaigaina ma fausaga/fale—e lē o lava le ua'i mai ma sonasonā naunauta'i o faia'oga, mātua ma tagata o Atu Motu o le Pasefika o lo'o alaala i a'ai, e u'una'iina nei tulaga mo i latou lava. E tele nisi matā'upu sa fa'aalia e iai ia le: 'auai aofia o mātua ma tagata a nu'u o le a'ai, a'oa'oina atina'e o le poto fa'apitoa o le 'au faigaluega, lagolagoina o komiti fa'apūlega, iloga mautū o le fa'atinoga o le taupulega o matā'upu o a'oa'oga, ma le fa'ataunu'u tonu o aiaiga e pei ona feagai ai nei atoa ma tulāfono mana'omia.

E maua e a'oga amata fa'ata'ita'i le fesoasoani mo sauniuniga ma faiga o tulaga fa'alaisene ma le tūsia fa'avae, mai i le tele o ni fa'apotopotoga ma matāgaluega; ma ua tāpāina e le 'au usufono le toe teuteuina o fetu'una'iga ma felogoa'iga i le va o matāgaluega ma a'oga amata fa'ata'ita'i. Ua fa'aalia fo'i i lenei tala tūsia ni fa'atonuga fa'ata'iala mo le lumana'i e fa'atatau i le fa'atinoina o ni su'esu'ega i lenei matā'upu, e aofia ai ma le fa'atinoina o ni su'esu'ega loloto aga'i i matā'upu sa fa'atūina mai e aofiaga potopoto ma tagata ta'ito'atasi sa 'auai mai i lenei su'esu'ega.

[Samoan]

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Ko e Lipooti 'Eni ki he Fakalakalaka 'a e Ngaahi Senita Ako'anga 'a e Longa'i Fanau Iiki 'i Nu'u Sila ni ke he Tu'unga 'o e Laiseni mo e Sata

Ko e lipooti 'ata'atā pe 'eni 'a e Kosilio ki he Fekumi Faka-Ako, 'o ne vakai'i ai 'a e fakalakalaka 'oku fai 'e he ngaahi senita ako'anga ke nau a'u 'o laiseni mo saata. 'Oku kau 'i he lipooti 'a e ngaahi fakamatala mei he:

- ngaahi potungaue 'oku nau tokoni'i mo poupou'i 'a e ngaahi senita ako'anga Pasifiki (kau ai mo e Potungaue Ako, Potungaue ki he Fakalakalaka 'a e Longa'i Fanau Iiki, 'Ofisi Vakai'anga 'o e Ako);
- ngaahi kautaha fakafonua ki he ngaahi ako'anga, mo e ngaahi 'apiako faka-faiako
- ni'ihi tokosi'i 'o e kau faiako, ngaahi mātu'a, kakai mei he komiuniti mo e kau puleako mei he ngaahi ako'anga Ha'amoa, Lalotonga, Niue mo e Tonga.

Na'e kole ki he ngaahi potungaue, ngaahi kulupu pe fakafo'ituitui ke nau fakamatala'i mei he tu'unga 'oku nau 'i ai, 'a e founga 'o e laiseni mo e saata, mo e ngaahi palopalema 'oku nau pehe 'oku tofanga ai 'a e ngaahi senita ako'anga. Na'e pehe 'e he ngaahi kulupu na'e faka'eke'eke ko e ongo me'a mahu'inga 'e ua 'oku na felei 'enau feinga ki he laiseni, ko e ngaahi fiema'u pa'anga/fakapa'anga/fakanaunau, mo e ngaahi fiema'u fakafale/faleako—neongo 'a e loto'aki 'e he kau faiako, ngaahi mātu'a mo e komiuniti 'a e ngaue, 'oku 'ikai fa'a fe'unga 'ata'ata ia ke ma'u ai 'a e laiseni. Na'e fakahā foki ai mo e ngaahi me'a kehekehe hange ko e: fakakau 'o e ngaahi matu'a mo e komiuniti, tokoni'i fakafaiako 'a e kau faiako, poupou ki he ngaahi komiti ako, fakahoko lelei 'o e polokalama ako, mo e makupusi 'o e ngaahi tu'utu'u ni mo e fiema'u fakalao kotoa pe.

'Oku tokoni'i 'a e ngaahi senita ako'anga 'i he 'enau feinga ke laiseni mo saata 'e he ngaahi kulupu mo e ngaahi potungaue kehekehe, pea 'oku faka'amu 'a kinautolu na'e faka'eke'eke ke to e maāu ange 'a 'enau ngaue mo 'enau fetu'utaki. 'Oku fakamahino foki 'i he lipooti ko'eni 'a e ngaahi fiema'u fekumi ki he kaha'u, kau ai mo ha to e fekumi 'oku loloto ange 'o makatu'unga 'i he ngaahi me'a ne lave ki ai 'a e ngaahi kulupu mo kinautolu na'e faka'eke'eke 'i he fekumi ko'eni.

[Tongan]

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Folafolaaga Hagaao ke he Fakatolomaki atu ki Mua he Lesini mo e Fakaata he tau Fonua Aoga Tama Ikiiki he tau Aelani i Niu Silani

Ko e folafolaaga taute kehe a nei mai he Kau Kumikumi Puhala Fakaako a Niu Silani. Ko e lali ke moua ko e fefe e tolomaki atu ki mua he tauteuteaga he tau fonua aoga tama ikiiki he tau Aelani ne taute ke lesini mo e fakaata ke taute e tau levekiaga ma e tau tama ikiiki. Kua aofia ai ke he kumikumiaga nei e tau talahauaga kehekehe mo e tau manatu fakakite mai he:

- tau kau ne lagomatai mo e foaki e tau gahua kehekehe ke he tau fonua leveki tama ikiiki he tau Aelani (ko lautolu ia ko e Ministry of Education, Early Childhood Development, mo e Education Review Office);
- tau kau lafilafi leveki tama ikiiki he tau Aelani mai he Motu katoa mo e tau kau ne leveki e tau fakaakoaga
- tau kau tokogaogao he tau faiaoga, tau mamatua, heagaapi mo e tau kau pule he tau Samoa, Kuki Aelani, Niue mo Tonga mai he tau fonua leveki tama he tau Aelani.

Ko e tau kau kehekehe oti, tau veveheaga kehekehe, mo e tau tagata takitaha ne ole ke talahau e tau puhala ke taute aki e tau fonua aoga tama ikiiki he tau Aelani ke lesini mo e fakaata ke gahua. Kua moua mai he tau kitekiteaga ia ha lautolu mo e tau mena ne fakaohooho aki e tau manamanatuaga ke fakakite ha ko e tau fonua ne kua fakagahua he magaaho nei. Ko e ua la e mena ne fakakanau aki e taute ke lesini mo e fakaata ke gahua ne talahau mai he tau kau oti ne tutala ki ai. Ko e tau mena ua nei ko e tupe/fakatupe he tau mena ke fakaaoga mo e tau fale/tau fonua ke fakaaoga. Pete he lalahi e tau magaaho he tau faiaoga, tau mamatua mo e tau heagaapi he ta Aelani ne fakamole ki ai po ke loga e tau mena kehekehe ka fakamole foki ki ai, ka e nakai la lahi ia. Kua fai mena foki kua fakakite mai he kumikumiaga nei, tau mena tuga e: fakaaoga he tau mamatua mo e tau tupuna mo e heagaapi, fakaakoaga ma e tau faiaoga ke magamaga e tau loto (professional development), lagomatai e tau kau komiti ne leveki, aoga foki e tau fakaholoaga he tau puhala fakaako, mo e fakataufata fakalataha e tau puhala gahua mo e tau mata fakatufono he vaha ti pihia foki mo e tau mata fakatufono fakave ne fakatoka pauaki ke taute aki.

Ko e tau fonua ne fakave ki ai e tau levekiaga he tau tama ikiiki lagomatai he tau puhala ne taute aki ke lesini mo e fakaata ke gahua, tau kau kehekehe mo e tau veveheaga kehekehe ne limalima auloa ke he tau gahua. Kua manako oti a lautolu ne limalima auloa ke mitaki e tau fakamatutakiaga mo e tau fakailoaaga ke he tau vahaloto ha lautolu. Kua folafola mai foki he fakakiteaga nei e falu mena kua kitia mo e tau puhala kua lata ke fakaholo aki e tau gahua he tau aho i mua ke lata mo e tau kumikumiaga he faahi gahua nei, tau aoga tama ikiiki he tau Aelani. Kua lafi ki ai e kumikumi fakahokulo ke lata mo e tau mena kua tokutoku mai he folafolaaga nei, mai he tau veveheaga kehekehe mo e tau tagata takitaha ne limalima auloa ke he fakaakoaga nei.

[Niuean]

Ripoti no Runga i te Tupuanga o te au Angaanga e Rave ia Atu Nei no Te Raitini e Tiataanga Atu i te au Punanga Apii Tamariki Patipika Uki ou Raro to Ratou Mataiti i te Rima i Nu Tireni Nei

E ripoti takake teia mei te Konitara Nu Tireni Kimi Kite Matatio o te Turanga Apii (Research) i te tupuanga o te au angaanga e rave ia nei e te au punanga aere kia raitini ia e kia tiata ia atu ratou. Tei roto i tereira tetai akamaramaanga e tetai irinakianga me:

- te au putuputuanga e tauturu nei e te rave angaanga ki te au punanga o te iti tangata Patipika no te tamariki uki ou raro ake te mataiti i te rima (mei te Ministry of Education, Early Childhood Development, Education Review Office);
- te au putuputuanga metua a te iti tangata Patipika no runga i te apiianga o te tamariki uki ou raro ake te mataiti i te rima, e te au putuputuanga terenianga angaanga
- Tetai pupu puapii meangiti ua, au metua/oire tangata e te au manitia Amoa, Kuki Airani, Niue e te Tonga aere o te au punanga aere o te au tamariki uki ou raro ake i te rima to ratou mataiti.

Kua pati ia te au putuputuanga katoatoa, te au pupu aere e te au tangata tataki-tai kia akamarama mai i ta ratou i kite o te akatereanga raitinianga e te tiataanga e te au tumatetenga aere ta teia au punanga e na roto nei i ta ratou tamanakoanga. Ko te nga mea ra e rua tei kitea ia mai e te au pupu katoatoa i uiui ia atu ana e te riro nei i te paruru e kia kore e rauka te raitiṇi mari ra ko te moni/raukaanga moni tauturu mai/te au mea rave i te angaanga e te are/ngai angaanga anga—kare rava oki e rava te tauturuanga no atu oki e, e maata ua atu te tauturu mei te au puapii mai, te au metua e te au putuputuanga tukeke o te iti tangata Patipika. E manganui katoa oki tetai au manako i akaari ia mai mei te: tauturuanga atu i te au metua aere e te oire tangata, akameitaki pakari atuanga i te turanga o te aronga angaanga, te turu atu i te au kumiti akaaere aere, te apii meitaki atuanga i te porokaramu akatereanga o te apii i akanoo ia mate tau i raro ake i te akaaereanga i akamou ia e te au ture o teia au turanga.

Ka tauturu aere ia teia au punanga aere nei ara i te akatereanga raitinianga e te tiataanga na tetai au pupu aere e tetai au pupu aere nei ara e kia taokotai meitaki ratou ma te angaanga kapiti. Te kite katoa atu nei teia ripoti i tetai akaraanga no te tuatau ka aere ia ki mua no te akarakara matatioanga mate oonu tikai i te au tumu manako i tukuna ia mai e te au pupu aere, e pera katoa oki e te au tangata tataki-tai i o ki roto i teia angaanga akara matatio i rave ia.

[Cook Island Māori]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Talofa lava ! Malo e lelei! Fakalofa lahi atu! Kia orana! Ni sa bula vinaka! Taloha ni! Ia orana! Ki ora koutou katoa! Greetings and acknowledgments!

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My sincere gratitude to Ann Dickason and Lesieli Tongati'o from the Ministry of Education from their support from the outset, and to Marie Housiaux (Data Management) and Brian Mitchell (Property Management Group), also from the Ministry of Education, for their prompt and generous response to my requests for data and information on statistics and the discretionary grants scheme.

My deep appreciation goes to the informants and interviewees from the national Pacific Islands early childhood organisations. Many of these women have committed their lives (over many years) to improve access to early childhood education for Pacific Islands children and their families. I was privileged to be able to record their extensive involvements during the course of the interviews for this study. I thank them for making time available to speak with me.

I was equally privileged that a number of supervisors, parents, and managers of PIECCs were able to share their experiences (challenges and achievements) as a result of participating in the processes of gaining licensed and chartered status for their centres. I thank them for their frankness, the ways in which they responded to the study questions, and their untiring efforts on behalf of Pacific Islands children and their families.

I would like to thank the members of the Advisory Committee of this project. They individually and jointly made many useful and informative contributions over 2 meetings and numerous communications by letter, fax, e-mail, and telephone during the drafting process, to ensure this report is as accurate and clear as it could be.

My colleagues at the New Zealand Council for Educational Research deserve mention for their support and contribution to the project: Dr Val Podmore, Group Leader of Early Childhood Research, for her mentoring, and assistance with methodology and data analysis; Lia Mapa for her assistance with interviewing, collation of data, and Advisory Committee administration; Fay Swann for editing; and Roberta Tiatia and Carlene Grigg for word processing and formatting of the final report.

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Kia ora! Fakaaue lahi! Malo 'aupito! Meitaki ma'ata! Soifua! Fa'afetai lava! Maururu! Thanks to you all!

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Rationale for This Study

Education statistics show that Pacific Islands students are still highly represented in terms of limited qualifications and low levels of academic achievement in the New Zealand education system at secondary school level (Ministry of Education, 1996). These statistics have concerned the Pacific Islands communities for some time and a number of initiatives have been developed, mostly by Pacific Islands women in early childhood education, to address this situation (Mara, 1995).

There has been some criticism from a number of sources about whether the level and pace of licensing and chartering PIECCs is sufficient to meet current needs, given the present demand on early childhood access, and the fact that addressing Pacific Islands academic underachievement in the compulsory education sector is a stated priority (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Alongside the concern about lack of academic achievement has been the desire to maintain the languages and cultural identities of Pacific Islands communities in New Zealand. Indeed, from the very beginning when Pacific Islands language groups (PILGs) were being set up in the 1970s and 1980s, linguistic and cultural maintenance was the main aim. The view then was that more and more New Zealand-born children were in danger of losing their heritages in a largely monolingual and monocultural society. In response to this view, Pacific Islands communities have, since the mid 1980s, been responsible for setting up PILGs throughout New Zealand.

The implication of this growth and development in Pacific Islands early childhood provision has prompted questions about how these provisions are meeting the educational and cultural needs of Pacific Islands children and their families.

Research in New Zealand by Podmore (1994), Wylie (1994), and others has cautioned that positive outcomes for children of early childhood provision are really dependent upon the quality of provision:

> . . . early childhood educare has positive outcomes for children—where it is of adequate quality. If the quality is poor, the outcomes are diluted, or even negative. (Wylie, 1994, p. 27)

International research also supports this view:

> Age-related research findings suggest that poor quality early childhood care and education may have negative outcomes, whereas high quality care enhances infants' social and cognitive development. Research from the U.S. and Britain shows that, for 3- and 4- year old children, attending early childhood care and education centres that have more highly trained staff and quality staff-child ratios has ongoing benefits. (Podmore, 1993, p. 35)

The processes and attainment of licensing and chartering are really an indicator to Pacific Islands parents and communities that groups have met Government standards according to the current criteria. Meeting licensing standards means that the Government of the day can be confident that an acceptable standard of education and care is available to all children. Surely then, it is of high economic, social, and educational interest to all interested parties and stakeholders that any

obstacles impeding progress towards the attainment of licensing and chartering be identified. This study is a first attempt by researchers at this identification process.

It needs to be noted at the outset that there are different opinions among the groups of informants in this study about the use of 2 terms—Pacific Islands language groups (PILGs) and Pacific Islands early childhood centres (PIECCs): PILGs are unlicensed language groups; PIECCs are licensed early childhood centres.

The national Pacific Islands early childhood organisations interviewed for this study prefer the term "centres" because they believe centres provide not only for the learning and teaching of Pacific languages and cultures, but also for care and education in line with the principles of early childhood education provision.

The Current Situation

Statistics available from the Ministry of Education, provide the following information:

Licensed, Chartered PIECCs

The most recent statistics from the Ministry of Education show that, at the time of writing, there were 40 licensed and chartered PIECCs (Ministry of Education, Data Management, personal communication, 22 May 1998).

There was a total of 983 children enrolled across 34 licensed, chartered PIECCs at 1 July 1997 (Ministry of Education, 1998b) (*see* table 1). The 1998 annual survey forms are being returned in the second half of 1998; final results will not be available until approximately November 1998.

Pacific Islands "Language Groups"

In 1997, 150 PILGs were funded by Early Childhood Development (ECD).[1] In total, 3,365 children were enrolled (1 July 1997 returns, Ministry of Education, 1998b, p. 23). The ethnic group of 3,268 of these children was classified as "Pacific Islands".

Between 1996 and 1997 there was a 9.9 percent **decrease** in the number of children at unlicensed PILGs. The number of unlicensed groups declined from 178 in 1996 to 150 in 1997. It is difficult to interpret from the statistics how licensing and chartering is affecting access for Pacific Islands children (*see* table 1).

Overall Early Childhood Enrolments of Pacific Islands Children

At 1 July 1997, early childhood enrolments of Pacific Islands children—

> . . . were concentrated in Early Childhood Development funded unlicensed Pacific Islands Language Groups (33 percent), licensed kindergartens (31 percent), and licensed childcare centres (27 percent). (Ministry of Education, 1998b, p. 23)

(For further details of enrolment of children of Pacific Islands descent 1987–1997, *see* table 2).

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[1] Formerly known as the Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU), since 1998 known as Early Child Development (ECD).

Table 1

Summary of Children of Pacific Islands Descent on Regular Rolls, and Number of Centres, 1990–1997

Type of Service	1990		1991		1992		1993		1994		1995		1996		1997	
	Chn No.	Cntrs No.	Chn No.	Cntrs No.	Chn No.	Cntrs No.	Chn No.	Cntrs No.	Chn No.	Cntrs No.	Chn No.	Cntrs No.	Chn No.	Cntrs No.	Chn No.	Cntrs No.
Licensed ECS																
Kindergartens	2,100	(575)	2,400	(578)	2,503	(582)	2,762	(582)	2,701	(587)	2,935	(591)	2,928	(594)	3,060	(595)
Playcentres	402	(621)	296	(606)	306	(578)	356	(576)	329	(572)	326	(562)	275	(557)	314	(545)
Childcare–regular	726	(702)	749	(741)	980	(852)	1,141	(933)[2]	1,791	(1,017)	2,160	(1,093)	2,453	(1,174)	2,656	(1,248)
Childcare–home-based	–	–	41	(53)	92	(72)	127	(88)	132	(100)	141	(112)	145	(118)	143	(130)
Developing Services																
ECD play groups	168	(192)	280	(266)	326	(334)	402	(447)	676	(441)	416	(473)	322	(475)	288	(486)
PILGs	2,553	(126)	3,077	(160)	3,592	(170)	3,782	(177)	3,900	(183)	3,673	(173)	3,654	(178)	3,268	(150)
Other[1]	72		50		58		3		–		101	9	82		52	
Total	6,021		6,893		7,857		8,800		9,529		9,752		9,859		9,781	

Source: Compiled from *Education Statistics of New Zealand, 1991–1998*, Ministry of Education.

Note:

[1] Other includes kohanga reo, Correspondence School, preschool classes, unlicensed playcentres.

[2] In 1993 Independent (Licensed) Pacific Islands groups were listed as a separate category under Childcare: 227 children in 8 centres.

Table 2

*Enrolment in Early Childhood Services of Children of Pacific Islands Descent 1 July 1987–1997**

	1990[3]	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
No. of Pacific Islands children enrolled[1]	6,021	6,893	7,857	8,800	9,529	9,752	9,859	9,781
Percentage of enrolments	5.0	5.5	5.8	5.9	6.2	6.1	6.2	6.0
Percentage increase in Pacific Islands children enrolled[2]	–	14.5	14.0	12.0	8.3	2.3	1.1	-0.8
Total enrolments	118,367	126,134	135,732	148,239	153,364	159,402	160,291	163,925

Note:

[1] Enrolments of Pacific Islands children were concentrated in Government-funded PILGs (38%) and kindergartens (30%).

[2] Only calculated after PILG statistics were included in *Education Statistics*.

[3] There were differences in data collection prior to 1990, therefore comparisons are possible only from 1990.

* Adapted from Meade (1998).

Summary of the Current Situation

The number of children enrolled at unlicensed PILGs has decreased in the past year. However, in total there are still considerably more children at unlicensed PILGs (3,365 children) than at licensed and chartered PIECCs (983 children).

Current Policies

In December 1996 the Ministry of Education published its plan to promote Pacific Islands people's success in the New Zealand education system: *Ko e Ako 'a e Kakai Pasifika*. In this publication goals and targets for each education sector including early childhood education were set out (pp. 14–15). The two main goals are to:

> 1. Increase the number of Pacific Islands children enrolled in early childhood services and the number of licensed and chartered PIECCs, and
> 2. Identify initiatives and propose a long-term Pacific Islands early childhood development plan, promoting quality, child health and welfare, ongoing support for early childhood centres, and the resourcing and strengthening of curriculum and management practices. (1996, p. 14)

At the end of 1996 the report notes that there were 32 licensed and chartered centres with places available for up to 988 children. This number is being increased through the Ministry of Education entering into contracts with 2 new providers to support PIECCs towards licensing and chartering status. Under the Pacific Islands Employment Strategy "Vaka Ou", extra funding has been made available to assist the Ministry of Education to achieve its stated goal of licensing up to 60 more centres by July 1999.

Role of the Ministry of Education

In its report *Better Beginnings* (1998a, pp. 10–11) the Ministry's role in early childhood education is outlined.

> The Ministry of Education:
> - provides policy advice to the Minister of Education on early childhood education
> - is the licensing authority of early childhood centres
> - provides discretionary grants for capital works
> - pays direct subsidies to chartered services
> - manages contracts with ECD and Specialist Education Services (SES).
>
> In addition, the Ministry has:
> - oversight of the effective implementation of Government policies for the early childhood sector
> - responsibility for the management of contracts for a range of Government-funded early childhood services. Since 1994 these services have included the development of curriculum guidelines and the provision of professional development programmes and advisory support for early childhood staff, parents, and management.

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An Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) is chaired by the Secretary for Education. It comprises (although not exclusively) representatives from the major early childhood organisations, reflecting the range of early childhood services in the country. This committee, set up to assist the Ministry of Education:

> . . . meets regularly to review and advise the Secretary on early childhood policies. (1998a, p. 11)

The text below was developed from written material supplied by the Contracts Management Division of the Ministry of Education on 26 March 1998.

Ministry of Education Assistance To Meet Licensing and/or Chartering Requirements

Currently (June 1998) there are 3 main Ministry of Education projects that assist with the process of licensing and chartering PIECCs.

- The first is the *Pacific Islands Licensing Project.* Under this project contracts have been awarded to 3 tenderers to provide pre- and post-licensing support and advice: Kautaha Aoga Niue (KAN), Auckland, for 5 Niue licensed and chartered centres; ECD for 10 centres (separate from their document of accountability targets), and the Pacific Islands Early Childhood Council of Aotearoa (PIECCA). The PIECCA contract is extended and integrated with the second group of projects.
- The second group of projects is the *Early Childhood Targeted Assistance Project.* In the 1997–98 Budget, Cabinet approved funding of $530,000 over 3 financial years to assist targeted licence-exempt early childhood centres to achieve licensed and chartered status. The criteria for the targeting related to selected geographical areas and targeted services either run by Maori or Pacific Islands communities or attracting a high proportion of these children. Te Kohanga Reo National Trust won one contract for 32 centres above and beyond its document of accountability with the Ministry of Education. In terms of PILGs, PIECCA has negotiated with the Ministry of Education to develop 22 centres which are currently in the Auckland area. PIECCA continues to review its targets to take into consideration the wider picture, and a possibility exists to consider national needs.

And funding for upgrading/renovating/building new centres is provided through a third source:

- The Pacific Islands Discretionary Grant Pool which is part of the Early Childhood Discretionary grants scheme.

The text below was developed from written material supplied by the Property Management Group of the Ministry of Education on 30 June 1998.

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Property Assistance

Since 1 February 1990 the Ministry of Education has operated the Early Childhood Discretionary grants scheme. Funding for this scheme was initially of $3.135 million per year. The scheme is designed to stimulate growth and participation in licensed and chartered early childhood services by providing assistance for the capital cost of establishing new centres or increasing the capacity of existing centres.

Since 1996 funding has been available to non-profit early childhood services through 3 pools: Maori; Pacific Islands, and General. In the 1997–1998 round the total allocated across the 3 pools was $5.685 million, $1 million of which was made available in the Pacific Islands pool. Funding was allocated in 1997–98 on a population-weighted needs basis. Criteria for application to the General funding pool included the size of the Pacific Islands pre-school population factor, the cost of housing, and unemployment levels, which enabled some Pacific Islands centres (not receiving targeted assistance) to apply.

The separate pool for PIECCs has only been operating since 1996–97 and was made possible through the "Vaka Ou: Pacific Islands Employment Strategy".

Under all pools centres qualify for assistance of up to 90 percent of the cost of a project. Funding priorities that were set for 1997–98 designated that 92 percent of the funding of the General pool should go to the creation of new places in the centre (through building new accommodation including modification or relocation, extending the capacity of an existing centre, or by helping a centre become licensed and chartered in terms of property). The remaining 8 percent of funding was allocated for essential health and safety capital improvements, for example, hygienic toilet facilities that would enable a centre to remain licensed and chartered.

PIECCs are eligible to apply either under the General pool (a pool of $2.85 million), or under the Pacific Islands pool of $1 million, but not both. If a PIECC is part of either the licensing or targeted projects, it has to apply to the Pacific Islands pool.

The applications are prioritised by district advisory committees at the regional levels of the Ministry of Education. These committees have representatives of the main services as members. Final decisions are made by the Ministry of Education National Allocations Committee. This committee includes a representative from the Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs.

The text below was developed from written material supplied by the Property Management Group and the Chief Adviser, Early Childhood Education, in the Ministry of Education, on 30 June 1998.

There are 2 types of grants that are available:

(a) Planning grants where centres can apply for up to a maximum $15,000 (including GST) covering non-capital costs for the planning of a project, for example, design costs, architects' fees, obtaining Resource Management Consent or Building Act approval. A planning grant is not repayable if a project does not proceed, provided the funds have been spent for the purpose for which they were granted.

(b) Capital grants which are for the cost of actual physical work to the building and related expenses such as building consent fees and architects commission. All such costs are based on current tenders or quotations. The minimum amount of funding which can be applied for is $5,000 (including GST). These grants are for capital improvements only and not for furniture or equipment. Capital grants are repayable in whole or part, if the service closes within 5 years, and/or the project does not start at all, or is not completed as agreed on the deed of covenant, or the grant is not used for the purpose it was allocated. Timelines in the deed of covenant can be altered with written authority from the Ministry of Education.

Successful applicants for the above grants are required to sign a deed of covenant which is an agreement that specifies the conditions of the use of the grants, ongoing responsibilities, completion requirements, and the circumstances under which repayment of the grant would be required. When projects are completed, the Ministry of Education requires a completion certificate, and, in the case of capital grants, it requires a code compliance certificate from the local authority and a photograph of the completed project.

All centres must have security of tenure over the property they occupy. Non-Maori and non-Pacific Islands centres must meet 20 percent of the total cost of the project themselves. Maori and Pacific Islands centres which apply to the General Pool must meet 10 percent of their costs.

The text below was developed from written material supplied by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority on 11 March 1998.

Training and Qualification Requirements

The second main requirement for licensing of PIECCs is the employment of trained staff. At present courses and qualifications are assigned a number of points by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). A base qualification must be held before licensing points can be awarded. A base qualification is a course which is approved by NZQA and which is worth at least 30 points. Currently, the Ministry of Education requirement for licensing is that the "person responsible" should have a minimum of 100 licensing points. Therefore, these people need to have a "base qualification worth 30 points" (at least) and at least 70 additional licensing points from other courses and experience.

The Ministry of Education is currently considering possible changes to the training and/or qualifications for the "person responsible" in all early childhood services.

Currently there are 3 main training providers registered by NZQA and funded through Equivalent Full-time Study (EFTS) for Pacific Islands training towards licensing points. These are:

- The A'oga Amata Training Centre in Wellington which offers the A'oga Amata Diploma of Early Childhood Studies and other certificate courses. These qualifications in total are worth 108 points.
- Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZ Childcare Association, which is approved and accredited by NZQA to deliver a Diploma of Teaching Early Childhood which is also approved for teacher registration purposes.
- PIECCA is delivering its approved courses through the Auckland, Christchurch, and

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- PIECCA is delivering its approved courses through the Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin colleges of education, and Whitireia Polytechnic at Porirua. Those courses have been allocated 110 points for the purposes of licensing.

The total number of Pacific Islands early childhood education graduates is not known, but figures from the different Pacific Islands training providers are available: for example, A'oga Amata Training reported it had produced over 300 graduates between 1987 and 1993. It needs to be noted that there are some Pacific Islands students gaining qualifications through other providers and the points gained on these courses are used towards gaining licensing points for centres.

In addition, university qualifications such the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree gained by some Pacific Islands early childhood education graduates from colleges of education and other training providers are recognised for licensing purposes.

PILGs

In the *NZ Gazette* of 31 January 1991 the Ministry of Education published the Government's criteria for "Early Childhood Centres Exempt from Licensing".

> Premises used for the purposes of a playgroup are exempt from the requirement to be licensed as an early childhood centre if they operate as playgroups. Playgroups are described as:
>
> > Community-based non-profit making early childhood centres where groups of parents and children meet regularly with the purpose of providing early childhood care and education for the children and families attending and where:
> >
> > i. Each playgroup meets for no more than one session of up to 3 hours on any one day;
> > ii. More than half the parents of the children attending each session are present in the same play area at all times throughout the session;
> > iii. The group of parents assume responsibility for each child attending the group;
> > iv. The group operates as an informal, non-profit making, community based group.
> > (Luxton, 1991, p. 325)

PILGs operate within the category of playgroups as outlined.

Under its document of accountability with the Ministry of Education, ECD has the responsibility to develop and support PILGs. EDC also, as previously stated, assists some PILGs to move towards achieving licensing and chartering status. As the *NZ Gazette* notice records, PILGs do not:

> . . . require a license to operate, providing they are community-based, non-profit making groups of parents and children who meet regularly with the purpose of providing early childhood care and education for the children and their families. (ECDU, 1994, p. 3)

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However, those groups wishing to apply for financial assistance from ECD have to meet some additional criteria such as:

- demonstrating community support;
- using at least one Pacific Islands language;
- offering a broad-based programme;
- keeping records of activities, attendance, and hours;
- having a management committee that operates its own bank account and audited accounts to show ECD each year;
- operating in safe premises with indoor and outdoor space, suitable materials and equipment, and adequate toilet facilities;
- being operated by the parents of the children who go to the group;
- providing for a minimum of 5 children and a maximum of 25 children;
- meeting regularly for at least one session per week of 2–3 hours' duration.

Limitations of the Study

It is inevitable that a first attempt at gathering data to describe an issue or process such as the licensing and chartering of PIECCs, from as comprehensive a range of perspectives as this project attempts, should have some gaps or omissions.

Constraints on time, resources, funding, and accessibility of informants set exacting parameters on most research projects, no less on this one. In addition, however, specific challenges need to be mentioned here so that readers of this report can take these factors into account when noting and interpreting the data collected.

Firstly, although the policy associated with the processes of licensing and chartering Pacific Islands early childhood groups was revised with the educational reforms and restructuring of the education system in 1989, Pacific Islands communities (particularly the women of those communities) had been developing early childhood groups for a number of years before that.

Secondly, each of the key informants from the national associations in this study has been involved in the development of the Pacific Islands early childhood sector for many years. They have had direct experience with all of the challenges and successes of development in their sector. The process of licensing and chartering is just one of the main processes (and currently probably the predominant one) for the informants since 1989. A related research problem has been the fact that the key informants themselves hold a number of positions and roles concurrently and they wanted to speak about these. In hindsight, this should have been taken into account and more time should have been devoted to the interviews so that each of their roles could have been more thoroughly explored.

Thirdly, there are particular gaps in terms of consultation which any future study would need to address. For example, a wider representation of centres should have been attempted if resources had allowed. This study includes a very small number of Cook Islands, Samoan, and Tongan centres and did not have the time or resources to include Niue, Fijian, or Tokelauan groups. In one sense, therefore, the study is exploratory; the information gained reflects the reported experiences of only a limited number of centres.

Not all national Pacific Islands early childhood associations were formally consulted. Two of our informants were national executive members of SAASIA (Sosaiete A'oga Amata Samoa i Aotearoa) but in the interviews they were not formally spokespeople for that organisation, so its

specific perspectives are not expressed in the report. Toufeiva, a Tongan early childhood association based in Auckland, the national Tuvalu organisation Akasaki Tuvalu early childhood association, and the national Tokelauan organisation, Ofaga o te Gagana Tokelau, were not interviewed for this study. The reasons for these omissions were time constraints and the difficulty of locating particular contact people.

Because of the above limitations it would perhaps be unwise to read this report as comprehensive or one from which wide generalisations can be derived. What this report does achieve, however, in summarising the findings from its sample of informants, is to raise a number of key issues pertaining to the process of licensing and chartering PIECCs from a range of perspectives. These issues are discussed more fully near the end of the report, together with recommendations for future research.

The challenges and issues described by the key informants and centres in the study are ones which require much closer scrutiny, analysis, and explanation (beyond the bounds of this present study) in order to address the ongoing and immediate issues of access to quality early childhood education for Pacific Islands children and their families in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

This independent study aimed to consult representatives of all parties currently involved with the licensing and chartering processes for PIECCs in order to fully explain the current situation from all perspectives.

After initial consultation with Ministry of Education staff, a list of possible participants was drawn up. The list included not only key informants from all the agencies which work with PILGs and PIECCs, but also representatives of the national Pacific Islands early childhood associations, key individuals in the development and support of PILGs and PIECCs, and representatives of centres themselves that were either already licensed and could describe the process, or unlicensed centres currently working towards licensing.

Sample Groups and Individuals

Initially, a total of 12 people across the agencies were interviewed, and a further 2 key informants from the agencies responded in writing. Then representatives of 8 national Pacific Islands early childhood associations were interviewed (a total of 11 people). In addition, representatives from a selected small sample of licensed and unlicensed centres were included in the study. Selection was made on the basis of representation of the main groups of established centres: Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands. We attempted to balance newly licensed centres with those licensed for a longer period of time, to balance rural with urban. The majority of the centres were in Auckland. Eleven people were interviewed across 7 PIECCs. Six of the 11 interviewees were either parents or management; the remaining 5 interviewees were teachers/supervisors. The centres represented are 2 Samoan (1 licensed, 1 unlicensed); 2 Tongan (1 licensed, 1 unlicensed); and 3 Cook Islands (1 licensed, 2 unlicensed). Two unlicensed centres are located in rural areas; the remaining 5 are all in urban areas.

Of the 4 unlicensed groups, one reported that it had no intention of becoming licensed and chartered; one which had been licensed and chartered (but was now unlicensed) intended to reapply sometime in the future. Of the remaining 2 unlicensed centres, one reported it had been working since 1990 to get licensed and chartered; the other reported it had been working since 1993.

Most of the informants were interviewed individually, except those from 2 agencies, one national organisation, and 2 centres, and these were interviewed in pairs. Also, one group of 5 people was interviewed from one agency, and a group of 6 people from 2 centres.

Data Collection Methods

The key informants were contacted, and appointments were arranged and confirmed in writing. The appropriate list of questions was sent to each key informant before the interview. The questions (*see* Appendices) were sent to key informants in the agencies and in the national Pacific Islands early childhood organisations and to centre representatives. Although provision was made for telephone interviews, all of the informants were interviewed face-to-face in Auckland, Wellington, and Tokoroa.

The researchers wrote the responses to the questions by hand on to an interview schedule. These written records were later entered on to the computer as typed transcripts. Most key informants were involved in interviews with 2 researchers from NZCER: one researcher interviewed the informant(s), while the other recorded the interview. At times the interviewer took key notes for crosschecking of the final typing of the transcripts. Seven of the individual and paired interviews were carried out by a single interviewer.

Full transcripts of the interviews were sent to all key informants and centres/groups. They were given the opportunity to add to, delete, or amend any of the recorded information. A number took the opportunity to do so and returned the amended transcript in a reply-paid envelope, whilst several others wrote further explanatory notes which were then returned to the researcher.

Analysis of Interviews

The responses by the key informants from the crown agencies and the national organisations fell into 2 main groups. Firstly, responses to questions about their services/support and roles in relation to PIECCs were grouped together, and, secondly, their perspectives on a number of issues to do with development to date, barriers to development, and future progress towards licensing and chartering of PILGs were noted.

From the analysis of the responses of these 2 groups of replies, common themes and issues were derived from the data, and these are discussed in detail towards the end of the report.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

A: Key Informants from Agencies and Organisations

Roles of Agencies

The agencies involved with the early childhood sector which were consulted for this study are also listed in appendix 2.

1. The Ministry of Education

The role of the Ministry as a Government department in the overall provision for, and management of, early childhood education has been outlined earlier in this report.

The Ministry of Education has had a specific role in the development of PIECCs since 1989. It has negotiated a document of accountability between the Minister of Education and 2 Crown agencies—Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Specialist Education Services (SES)—to provide centres with support and advice. In addition, the Ministry has purchased agreement(s) with these agencies for some specific services and these are described in subsequent sections.

A key informant from the Ministry of Education outlined its role in the licensing and chartering processes.

The development contractor (for example, ECD), who is responsible for preparing centres for licensing, will signal to the Ministry of Education that it believes a centre is ready to be licensed. A centre may itself directly approach the Ministry to signal it is ready to be licensed. A Ministry of Education liaison officer will then visit the centre. One informant reported that liaison officers may often attend extra meetings in the evenings in their own time to clarify any misunderstandings, or to give information face-to-face.

It was reported that there has been a useful networking in the northern region by the Ministry of Education with ECD, PIECCA, and ERO. If there are any misunderstandings about licensing standards, for example, the officer will make a visit to support that work. Also, if ERO's reports on centres show that there are non-compliance areas such as in auditing of accounts or management, the Ministry of Education will work with the centres to assist them to meet the required standards.

Centres become licensed when they demonstrate they have met the licensing standards, but Government funding does not commence until the charter is approved. The informant reported that sometimes centres have to be supported to understand that licensing and chartering are 2 separate processes. In addition, they may choose to reach both sets of requirements at the same time to begin to receive funding. For some centres there has been a gap in time between achieving licensing and finalising their charters.

It was reported that the more recently licensed and chartered centres are reaching the standards very well and the quality of applications is improving. Such improvements were attributed to the work and preparation put in by the development contractors: ECD, Pacific Islands Early Childhood Council Aotearoa (PIECCA), and Kautaha Aoga Niue (KAN).

The Ministry is reported to have made some changes to the licensing and chartering processes, and some consideration is being given to further changes to improve the process for centres. The informant reported that these include Ministry visits to all centres (particularly those which have

not been visited recently) and sending staff in pairs to centres (the Auckland officer has been asked to help with visits in other regions where there is no Pacific Islands liaison officer). The research team was told about the need for more Pacific Islands personnel in regional offices, for example in Auckland, so that Pacific Islands centres have a contact person whom they know and can relate to. The demand is still high in Auckland because it has the largest number of PIECCs to visit and because it is also the fastest-growing area for these centres.

2. *Early Childhood Development (ECD)*

ECD is a service agency, not a policy agency as is the Ministry of Education. ECD has a document of accountability (DOA) contract with the Minister of Education to deliver aspects of Government policy, but it has limited involvement in the development of policy. In a written response of 2 June 1998, ECD outlined its responsibilities:

Through its document of accountability, ECD has responsibility to:

- provide information and advice to the Minister of Education;
- provide information to groups including parents, educators, and others;
- provide licensing and chartering advice and support to PILGs (this includes advice and support regarding the discretionary grants process);
- provide parental workshops;
- provide awhina maatua—parent support programmes;
- collect and collate statistics regarding the number of ECD-funded PILGs and Pacific Islands children enrolled in PILGs for the Ministry of Education; and
- manage the disbursement of an operational grant to PILGs and monitor use of the grant.

Giving advice and support to PIECCs about licensing and chartering has been a central role of ECD since it was established in 1989. Through its association since that time with centres, ECD has been instrumental in supporting the establishment of PILGs and the development of some of these groups into licensed and chartered PIECCs.

The use of the term "Pacific Islands language groups" by ECD dates back to its first involvement with Pacific groups. Pacific communities themselves had, since the early 1980s, referred to their developing early childhood groups as "nests" or "language nests"; the agency acknowledged this and used the term "language groups". ECD continues to use "PILGs" because it is also used by the Ministry of Education to describe a particular category of licence-exempt playgroups. ECD reported that it would respond positively to any change of name or preferred term should a desire be expressed by the Pacific communities for a change or the consistent use of one term.

ECD raised the issue of the different "models" for Pacific Islands early childhood services, that is, licensed and unlicensed, and whether being licensed and chartered is the only way PILGs can receive a "quality stamp". PILGs are parent operated, and many PILGs do not have either the capacity or aspiration to become a licensed and chartered centre. The agency asks "Will the views of those groups be accounted for in this project [study]?"

In addition to the licensing and chartering advice and support available to PILGs via its document of accountability, ECD has a separate contract with the Ministry of Education to provide licensing and chartering advice and support to 10 targeted PILGs in 1998. ECD's first

such contract in 1997 targeted 12 centres. Unfortunately only 6 of these centres were successful in securing a capital grant through the Ministry of Education's discretionary grants scheme. This meant that half the centres had neither the capacity nor the ability to reach licensing and chartering requirements for that year. Therefore, those unsuccessful centres were supported by ECD through its DOA. The contract includes a post-licensing support component for centres licensed within the term of the contract. This support is focused on monitoring centres' implementation of their management plans.

In 1996 as a result of the Government's Vaka Ou initiative, extra licensing advice and support for centres seeking to become licensed and chartered became contestable and 2 further organisations—Kautaha Aoga Niue (KAN) and PIECCA—won contracts with the Ministry of Education. ECD comments that the contestable model has resulted in a number of different providers, and the nature of the different contracts held by these providers caused confusion in the Pacific Islands early childhood sector—at least from ECD's perspective and from feedback it has received from the Pacific Islands communities.

ECD also has a contract with the Ministry of Education to contract service providers to deliver the Parents as First Teachers (PAFT) programme. Neither this contract with the Ministry nor the PAFT programme itself are initiatives with direct implications for PIECCs, but they do have implications for Pacific Islands families, communities, and early childhood organisations. ECD has contracted 3 Pacific Islands providers to deliver the PAFT programme to Pacific Islands families in the Wellington, South Auckland, and West Auckland areas: Te Umiuminga, PIECCA, and Anau Ako Pasifika.

ECD has a national contract with the Ministry of Education for 1998 and 1999 to provide professional development services to licensed and chartered PIECCs. The contract focuses on the effective implementation of Te Whāriki and the revised Desirable Objectives and Practices.

ECD employs a network of Pacific Islands co-ordinators and 3 Pacific Islands parent support workers throughout the country who, as a group, are able to deliver advice and support in a range of Pacific languages and in culturally appropriate ways.

3. The Education Review Office (ERO)

The Education Review Office is responsible for reviewing and reporting on all licensed and chartered early childhood centres including Pacific Islands centres. The Office has no formal association with centres until it is notified by the Ministry of Education that a centre has been licensed; at that point centres are entered on the ERO database.

The Office sometimes needs to make contact with ECD, PIECCA, or the Ministry regarding the status of centres. It was reported by the ERO informants that it is not always clear who the contact person is at the Ministry for accessing the updated information on licensed centres. The Office reports that it works locally and nationally with ECD.

A review is scheduled usually within the first 6 months of the centre's achieving licensed status. The Office's tasks include visiting and conducting the review, writing the review report, and following up responses to the report.

The text below was developed and finalised in consultation with the Education Review Office from May to August 1998.

The review process itself involves the following steps:

1. After formal notification from the Ministry of Education that a centre is licensed and chartered, an initial letter goes out to the centre management from ERO advising of the review. Attached to this is a list of documents to be made available before and during the review. The letter is followed by a telephone call to clarify the communication and to confirm the date of the onsite review. A second letter goes out to confirm the onsite dates.

2. When centres are first visited it is emphasised that the licensee must be present (this person is often not the same person as the supervisor). The licensee is the official link or contact person between the centre and the Office.

3. The centre staff and management are made familiar with the process. All the papers and documentation that are required are identified and explained. The process is lengthy and detailed. Background knowledge of the centre, its language, and its culture is very important. Many of the Pacific Islands centres are new and are usually going through the review process for the first time.

4. ERO finds out from ECD which centres are moving towards licensing. When ERO staff visit, they expect centres to have reached at least minimum standards or be developing beyond compliance requirements. As part of the regular review, programme delivery is given close inspection. An onsite review usually takes 1½ to 2 days.

5. At the end of the review there is a feedback session at which the reviewer takes the centre staff and parents through the findings and the compliance issues that need to be addressed. This session is open to staff and parents. For non-compliance areas, centres are encouraged to seek assistance (usually from ECD or PIECCA) and suggestions are given as to whom to contact there.

6. When the draft report is completed, occasionally the reviewer goes through the report again, face-to-face with the licensee and staff. The Office allows 15 working days for a response to the draft, before the final report is produced. Sometimes a non-response can be due to the fact that the centre is attempting to complete everything listed rather than advising ERO that they have made a start. Usually, as all points of the report are explained clearly to the centre, there are no major challenges to the final report.

7. If ERO is concerned about centres, discretionary (follow-up) reviews are signalled. These occur within a specific time frame (3 months to 1 year). This opportunity can be welcomed by centres so that they can demonstrate that progress has been made.

The ERO notes that about one-third of all PIECCs are having to be revisited with discretionary reviews, a relatively high number. The reason could be the newness of the whole review process, as Pacific Islands centres have a very much shorter historical background or experience compared with other early childhood services.

ERO also believes that the evaluation process provides a basis for centres to use for their own self-review processes. This is very important at this stage of their development, the informants report.

ERO notes among its successes having established some important linkages with the Ministry of Education, both at national and local levels, and with ECD and PIECCA so that these organisations are in a position to give some pointers for development to PIECCs. In addition, ERO believes that its reviews and onsite discussions have helped centre staff to improve their understanding of early childhood regulations and given some pointers for further development. ERO has seen the improvements made by centres on subsequent visits, particularly where centres had contacted recommended organisations and agencies for assistance.

4. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)

The Authority is responsible for administering the National Qualifications Framework and the Early Childhood Licensing Point system. The point system is used by the Ministry of Education as part of its licensing requirements for early childhood centres, including PIECCs. As NZQA's response to the researcher's request for information was that this was its sole role in the licensing process, it was decided that NZQA informants would not be interviewed.

NZQA is able to supply information on the current points allocation given to the various Pacific Islands early childhood training courses on offer. However, it needs to be noted that some Pacific Islands trainees are studying other courses with other providers (not specifically with Pacific Islands providers) in order to gain qualifications. As stated previously, the points system is currently under review by the Ministry of Education. Any changes which may be decided upon will inevitably affect the licensing of PIECCs.

5. Specialist Education Services (SES)

This Crown agency also works under a document of accountability to the Ministry of Education to work with children with special needs. One of the core services the agency provides is its early intervention services for infants and young children from birth to school age. The agency gives advice, guidance, and support to early childhood centres and staff as well as direct support for young children with high support needs in early childhood settings and homes. PIECCs, as licensed and chartered providers, have access to this agency to help meet the needs of children within their centres.

At the present time SES—particularly in the Auckland, West Auckland, and Manukau areas where the majority of licensed centres operate—has very few referrals from Pacific Islands centres and this is of some concern to it as it does get referrals of Pacific Islands children from kindergartens and playcentres.

SES aims to employ more Pacific Islands staff in those regions—there are already a number of Pacific Islands education support workers and at least one early intervention teacher. A second early intervention teacher is being supported through training and is close to graduation.

The need for an advisory or a Pacific Islands reference group was expressed. Such a group could assist the early intervention services with referral, assessment, and service delivery to Pacific Islands centres which may need a great deal of support with planning for, and including, special needs children in their programmes.

The present challenge for SES is to inform Pacific Islands communities, in a culturally appropriate way, about special education and in particular its early intervention services. With the assistance of more Pacific Islands staff trained in special education, SES is very interested in working with Pacific Islands centres to meet their early childhood education disability support and service needs.

SES in the Auckland region is particularly aware that there are Pacific Islands children in early childhood centres who are missing out on advice and support; it is committed to investigating real ways to address this situation.

Issues Raised by the Agencies

The key participants from the agencies were asked to give their views and perspectives on the successes to date of the outcomes of their services or support; about challenges they thought centres faced in becoming licensed and chartered; how the agencies themselves could be more responsive and supportive in the licensing process; about what had assisted centres in that process; and about the challenges that lay ahead for centres from their particular perspectives.

Reported Successes

- All agencies acknowledged that policies and initiatives implemented since 1989, and particularly since 1996, had resulted in more centres being licensed and chartered. However, there was an awareness that the contestable process had increased the number of organisations working to develop groups into centres.
- ECD cautioned that "there may be more PIECCs but the percentage of Pacific Islands children participating in early childhood education has not increased markedly." (Note: *see also* tables 1 and 2.)
- The start made on building up expertise and spreading information about licensing and chartering across the Pacific Islands early childhood organisations should be extended. Two informants from one agency reported that this extension of experience and knowledge had occurred particularly since the letting of contracts for developing centres towards licensed and chartered status.
- One agency made particular note of the fact that training and the increase in the number of Pacific Islands early childhood graduates from the various training providers were having a positive effect on the quality of provision in centres and on their ability to attain and maintain standards. They had detected an improvement over time of centres being able to understand and meet regulatory requirements.

Challenges to Gaining Licensed Status

- Funding and lack of finance was seen by most agencies as the primary barrier to licensing, not only in terms of buildings and facilities that meet health and safety requirements but also for purchase of resources, employing staff, and ongoing professional development. ECD's experience is that Pacific Islands groups need up to 3 times more support than other mainstream centres.
- The particular issues of buildings—purchasing, modifying, and negotiating occupancy agreements—cause difficulties for groups. Local body and resource management requirements also held up many centres wishing to develop their land and premises.
- A further difficulty associated with buildings and premises is actually obtaining access to appropriate facilities or land to build on. Many groups which are part of churches have the use of (and share) church facilities; other groups have the use of school or city council facilities or land. Some of these options do not always provide for long-term stability; for example, if school rolls increase, the school may decide those buildings have to be "reclaimed".

- Agencies were concerned about Pacific Islands communities being able to understand fully the language of regulations and requirements, and saw the need for more translation to facilitate clearer understanding of the documents and processes which contain these requirements. Further cultural barriers or possible areas of conflict were acknowledged in the cultural practices in the teaching and learning interactions in the centres. The resolution of such conflicts probably requires Pacific Islands teachers to build bridges with the parents and communities.
- The lack of resources, for both staff and children, in Pacific Islands languages was seen as a barrier to full immersion and the development of early literacy for Pacific Islands children in the centres. There was a warning expressed about the possible loss of some languages without some deliberate support and intervention both by the Pacific communities themselves and the various agencies.
- ECD suggested that the cost of training was a barrier for Pacific Islands students completing early childhood qualifications; many students rely on student loans and once they graduate they invariably have to seek employment in licensed and chartered centres to secure a wage, not only to repay their loan, but also to support their families. In many areas there are not the numbers of Pacific Islands licensed and chartered centres to employ these graduates. The employment needs of graduates often provide the incentive and impetus for PILGs to seek licensed and chartered status; otherwise graduates seek employment in non-Pacific centres, and the PILGs lose qualified staff.

Support from Agencies Themselves

- One agency and an individual informant from a second agency commented that they are working within a context of a lack of a co-ordinated Pacific Islands early childhood education policy. Their opinion was that this situation limits effective and co-ordinated responsiveness and provision of support for current needs of PIECCs. They went on to comment that some strategies for Pacific Islands early childhood education could be derived from an overall co-ordinated policy. This could lead to an increased likelihood of improved funding, and the co-ordination and targeting of resources towards the production of quality provision.
- Some agencies also mentioned the need to have more Pacific Islands staff in their own service delivery so that communication, flow of information, and appropriate response to needs could be enhanced. Particular mention was made by one informant that more Pacific Islands males could assist in dealing with centre managers or licence holders.
- In contrast to the above point, ECD reported that it is able to deliver advice and support in the mother tongue of the centre. In addition to the Pacific Islands co-ordinators and Pacific Islands parent support workers it employs, ECD has a Pacific Islands position on its management team and another on its board. It acknowledged the time given and the commitment of its staff to centres. Many of ECD's internal resources have been translated into Pacific Islands languages, and staff operate collegially, so there is a sharing of expertise, knowledge, and information amongst them.
- One agency saw the contracting out of services to a number of organisations as giving choice for centres but sometimes causing confusion for some, since often the details of contracts are not always widely promulgated. In order to access appropriate support, therefore, they claim centres need to know more clearly the provisions negotiated under each contract. There is a danger, they report, of inconsistent quality of advice or duplication of advice being given to

centres.

- Most of the agencies reported that the Government purchases particular services from them, so without an increase in Government funding present services cannot be expanded. An increase in Government funding would assist in meeting some of the present "gaps" they had already identified, including being able to contract in Pacific Islands expertise to assist them in servicing language and cultural requirements of particular groups.

Sources of Assistance

From their work with centres and Pacific Islands communities, agencies reported the following factors as having helped centres become licensed and chartered:

- Agencies see evidence that national organisations and centres are becoming better informed about early childhood education.
- The tendering of contracts and their successful completion act as an encouragement to Pacific Islands centres. A sizable increase in the number of centres is expected, as more national Pacific Islands organisations are empowered to give advice and support.
- The role of committed, qualified Pacific Islands families and communities cannot be overstated in managing and assisting the process of licensing and chartering—a number of these people are members of the national Pacific Islands early childhood organisations. Several agencies paid tribute to parents and communities for their commitment, hard work, and unwavering belief in the need for PIECCs. The supportive and key role of the churches was also acknowledged.
- The quality of advice received by centres from a range of agencies, associations, and individuals has contributed towards helping centres reach licensed and chartered status.
- Two individual informants from 2 different agencies also gave some historical perspective on the overall development of Pacific Islands early childhood groups and centres. They believed that the original seeding grants from the Department of Education and the valuable liaison between the Department and Anau Ako Pasifika and PACIFICA (Pacific Women's Council) were crucial to the establishment of a new, distinctive sector of early childhood education in the mid 1980s which still exists today.

Future Challenges for Centres

Informants in the agencies detailed what they saw as future challenges for licensed centres:

- Concern for the almost total reliance by centres on ongoing Government funding to remain viable and sustain their licensed status and compliance with legislative requirements, particularly in their first year of operation.
- The provision of information to groups to include the long-term implications of becoming licensed and chartered.
- Once licensed and chartered, one agency cautioned, many centres must charge fees to remain financially viable. Parents did not have to pay fees when the centre was a PILG. As many parents are unemployed, they may remove their children from a licensed centre and either take them to another PILG or keep them at home.
- Developments for groups other than Samoan are signalled; for example, the necessary developments for Tongan, Cook Islands, and Niue groups may depend on their gaining contracts and funding in the near future.
- There are implications for schools in terms of language maintenance for other Pacific Islands groups. There is already a national curriculum framework for the Samoan language from early childhood through to secondary school level, and there are moves afoot for other Pacific

communities such as the Cook Islands community to develop their own language curriculum framework.

- Centres are advised by ERO to look after their trained staff in a number of ways, not only by remuneration and working conditions but also in terms of opportunities for further training and professional development. In its 1997 report to the House of Representatives, ERO stated:

> The quality of the children's programme is totally dependent on the skills and experience of the supervisors, and the children's learning is adversely affected where staff are relatively inexperienced in both management and early childhood teaching. (ERO, 1997a, p.16).

- In terms of professional development a strong recommendation was made by informants from 2 agencies for improved training for all early childhood teachers (including Pacific Islands teachers) in teaching skills and managing of interactions—when real learning takes place.
- A real focus on quality is timely for the centres, as has happened with other early childhood providers.
- The resolution of some of the cultural issues outlined previously were also seen as ongoing challenges for the future, and the need for key people to assist this process was reiterated.

Future Challenges for Agencies

The future challenges for the agencies include how they can respond to the challenges facing centres and what factors would assist them to do so:

- Two individual informants from 2 different agencies who have a long historical connection with Pacific Islands early childhood education thought that the future would really only be secured with some significant increase in funding. A greater level of negotiated devolution of resources and decision making needs to occur so that the Pacific Islands early childhood sector could set, and have greater control of, its own destiny. In the early 1980s the leaders of Pacific Islands early childhood education expressed a desire to stay within the mainstream and not become a separate entity. Such views have influenced decisions made since that time, but the informants speculated on whether the strategy of staying within the wider early childhood sector may still be relevant or appropriate.
- ECD supports the development of various national Pacific Islands early childhood organisations and wonders whether an alternative model to the current contestable contracts model would be more appropriate to ensure consistency and to build on the strengths of these organisations.
- ECD reports that the amount of funding available for capital grants for PILGs is not currently meeting the needs in the Pacific Islands communities. The time would seem to be right to evaluate the discretionary grants scheme and the implications for PILGs when the Vaka Ou funding runs out next year.
- Better co-ordination of, communication between, and consultation with, Pacific Islands national organisations by the agencies would facilitate future development.
- Two representatives of PIECCA sit on the Ministry of Education's Early Childhood Advisory Committee at present. It has to be asked whether it is possible for 2 people from one organisation to represent all Pacific Islands early childhood organisations and stakeholders.

- ECD hopes that the review of early childhood regulations (now completed and amended) will impact positively on the future development of PIECCs.

Greater cohesion across the whole early childhood sector remains a challenge for all agencies, organisations, and centres. The need for Pacific Islands early childhood education to remain a part of that wider network, while retaining its own identity, was seen by several of the agency informants as being important for future progress and development.

Role of Pacific Islands National Early Childhood Associations

The Pacific Islands associations consulted for this study are listed in appendix 2. It is important to state at the outset that many of the developments in the Pacific Islands early childhood sector grew out of, and continue to be sustained by, the various Pacific Islands churches in New Zealand (Ete, 1993). In 1977 a national organisation of Pacific Islands women was established called PACIFICA (Pacific Women's Council). That organisation acted as an important rallying point for many of the women who later went on to play important roles in the Pacific Islands early childhood education sector. PACIFICA was in fact the main lobbying group in the 1970s and 80s that worked to secure and implement a number of Pacific Islands educational initiatives (Mara, 1995).

1. Pacific Islands Early Childhood Council Aotearoa (PIECCA)

PIECCA was formed as a national council in 1990 and registered as a trust in 1992. It was set up as an umbrella group for all the Pacific Islands early childhood national associations: Samoan, Cook Islands, Niue, Tongan, Tuvalu, and Tokelauan. At the time PIECCA was established the major issue was that of qualifications, so its first initiative was to set up a training programme that would provide the licensing qualification requirements. The organisation set up its own register of centres to put in place a database to assist with collating information and to properly co-ordinate its activities so it could deliver a comprehensive service to centres.

PIECCA has a number of key involvements: it has two representatives on the Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) to the Ministry of Education; it is contributing to the development of Te Whāriki, and to the drafting of the Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs) support document. The organisation is also represented on the Education Statistics Advisory Forum and Higher Level Funding Committee and was involved with the Future Direction Report co-ordinated by the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI).

Before 1995-96 PIECCA had been giving voluntary and informal advice to Samoan, Tongan, Niue, and Cook Islands member organisations, but since that time, with PIECCA winning a Ministry of Education contract, the advice, support, and development has been extended in a more systematic way to targeted centres and groups. The contracts for centre development require PIECCA to give assistance in planning, consultation, policy development, and all the requirements for licensing and chartering centres.

PIECCA's other achievements include linking up with the Ministry of Education contracts for the Taiala (Samoan Language Curriculum Framework) and a contract with ECD to deliver the PAFT programme.

2. *PIECCA Training*

In 1991 the current co-ordinator of training was asked to write a training course for staff specifically to teach in PIECCs. The first graduates from the PIECCA training course graduated in 1994, and were awarded the Diploma of Pacific Island Early Childhood Education. PIECCA courses are offered by and through the colleges of education in Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin, and at Whitireia Polytechnic in Wellington.

The PIECCA training arm has assisted in the writing of unit standards for NZQA, has set up "model" centres for trainees, has completed its own action research on learning styles, and publishes a newsletter on behalf of the association on a monthly basis. It values its relationship with the various churches and the centres allied to it through their trainees.

3. *Te Punanga o te Reo Kuki Airani o Aotearoa Inc*

The first punanga was established in Berhampore, a Wellington suburb, in 1983. This was the first Pacific Islands language group formed in New Zealand. Te Punanga o te Reo Kuki Airani o Aotearoa Incorporated was launched in 1991 and has 44 affiliated punanga: in Auckland, 18; Tokoroa, 4; Hamilton, 2; Hawkes Bay, 6; Rotorua, 2; Palmerston North, 2; Wellington, 3; Christchurch, 2; Dunedin, 4; Invercargill,1. There are other Cook Islands early childhood groups in New Zealand not affiliated to Te Punanga o te Reo Kuki Airani o Aotearoa.

Currently only 7 punanga nationwide are licensed and chartered. This Pacific Islands early childhood education organisation is working, with the minimal resources available to it, towards getting more centres licensed and chartered. Its representative reported that it was disappointing to have missed out on a Ministry of Education contract tendered for in 1996-97. However, the current president reports that the work goes on and the organisation does the best it can within its resources to meet the educational needs of the Cook Islands and other Pacific Islands children in Aotearoa.

The association gives support to its centre members through meeting together and networking. Under the leadership of a resources committee, songs, chants, and other language resource ideas for centres are developed. Meetings provide opportunities for sharing resources.

Te Punanga o te Reo Kuki Airani maintains links with Learning Media, Anau Ako Pasifika, and ECD. The national executive committee meets 3-4 times a year to liaise on progress, make plans for future development, share achievements of centres, and exchange ideas for resources.

4. *A'oga Amata Training*

The first a'oga amata (Samoan early childhood centre) was set up in 1985 in Newtown in Wellington, and an association with that name was set up in 1986. From 1987-93, its training establishment produced over 300 graduates, many of whom went on to other early childhood training and who now teach in centres around the region. The association has 18 a'oga (centres) as members across the Wellington region: 8 of these are licensed and chartered and 2 are close to being licensed and chartered.

As well as running training courses, the association meets regularly with all its supervisors to discuss not only professional development matters, but also policies and the requirements of the main agencies. For example, when the forthcoming revised Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs) part of charter requirements from the Ministry of Education are mandated, the informant said this group will support their centres in implementing them.

The distinctive nature of A'oga Amata as a training provider is that all training is delivered

using the Samoan language. This has required the director to translate many complex documents and publications for the students so that they have access to all the information they need as teachers and supervisors. This has also been a very time-consuming aspect for the tutors, but the use of the Samoan language is central to A'oga Amata's philosophy and pedagogy.

The association also sees itself as a lobby group to policy and decision makers, and attributes part of its success to date to its lobbying and advocacy efforts. The A'oga Amata Training Institute has very close links with SA'ASIA (Sosaiete A'oga Amata Samoa i Aotearoa—the current president is also the Director of the A'oga Amata Training Institute) as a regional member of that organisation. It also has close links with FAGASA (the national Samoan Language Association). Currently 18 a'oga (8 of which are licensed and chartered) are affiliated to A'oga Amata in Wellington but, in common with other national organisations, not all Samoan centres in the Wellington region belong to this association. The A'oga Amata Training Institute also values its links with the Wellington College of Education with which it is working on a contract to the Ministry of Education for the Taiala project, which is delivering the national Samoan Language Curriculum Framework—in this case in a'oga amata in the Wellington region. The association has recently joined FECEO (the Federation of Early Childhood Education Organisations).

5. Kautaha Aoga Niue (KAN)

This organisation was established in 1987 by a dedicated group of Niue educationists and supporters. It evolved out of the first Niue early childhood group, which had been established in Auckland in 1985. In 1988 the Niue Language Committee, with close links to both these groups, was formed. Kautaha Aoga Niue was officially formed in 1991. It has formal links with the Niue Advisory Committee, which brings together all Niue people in New Zealand.

Together this network is able to organise and co-ordinate education and language initiatives for Niue people in New Zealand. Before 1996 only one Niue language group had attained licensed and chartered status. In 1996 Kautaha Aoga Niue was able to gather not only teachers but also parents and professionals to tender successfully for a Ministry of Education contract to develop and support towards licensed and chartered status 5 Niue early childhood centres (Aoga Niue). This contract expired in April 1998.

Kautaha Aoga Niue set up development teams for each early childhood group, headed by experienced educationists. The teams strategically shared legal, financial, and property expertise from the Niue community wherever possible to help centres fulfil all the requirements for licensing and chartering. Since 1996 Kautaha Aoga Niue has been very involved in a "hands on" way in this contract as it has assisted Niue centres through consultation processes, training in management areas, developing policies, gaining resource consent for buildings and renovations, negotiating licences to occupy, finding suitably trained staff, collecting necessary equipment and resources, and organising health and safety checks.

At the time of writing Kautaha Aoga Niue was reported to be on track for meeting its contract deadlines. The association is also turning its attention to the learning and teaching programmes and placing priority on centres using, supporting, and promoting Niue language and culture. The Niue Language Committee, Niue Early Childhood Development staff, and the centres have been working together to produce appropriate resources. The future challenge is to begin linking Niue culture and language to the existing New Zealand curriculum framework (Te Whāriki) to ensure that quality provisions for Niue children are maintained. The association is intending to affiliate in the near future with the international preschool network, OMEP

(Organisation Mondiale pour L'Education Prescholaire/World Organisation for Early Childhood Education).

6. Utu Lelei (Tongan Early Childhood Association)

This is a relatively new association—it was officially launched in October 1997. It is one of 2 Tongan early childhood associations—the other is Toufeiva which has operated over a number of years in the Auckland region. Utu Lelei is a national organisation for Tongan early childhood educators in Aotearoa. Utu Lelei is the name given by Princess Siu'ilikutapu Kalaniuvalu Fotofili of Tonga to the organisation. Utu means "to harvest" and Lelei means "good". The Princess's rationale for selecting that name is based on a vision that the work of Tongan early childhood educators and parents will result in a "good harvest" in Tongan children through all the activities in their lives.

The main objective for setting up this organisation is to support the development of early childhood education within the Tongan community. At present there are about 50 ako'anga Tonga in Aotearoa and only 3 of these are licensed and chartered. Thus the organisation's current main concern is the quality of the early childhood education and care in about 47 of its centres. Utu Lelei currently networks and supports a number of ako'anga Tongan early childhood groups and centres not only in their efforts to become licensed and chartered, but in other ways such as promoting the maintenance of the Tongan language and of cultural values in the delivery of their programmes; accessing and utilising information from Government and community agencies; supporting centres in providing quality programmes and being good employers; developing Tongan resources with appropriate training in using these resources; developing, designing, and delivering training packages; supporting Tongan children as they move from early childhood through to primary and secondary schools; and, lastly, providing one voice for Tongan early childhood education in Aotearoa.

Utu Lelei reports that there are 7 ako'anga Tonga in Auckland close to licensed and chartered status and it is supporting those centres to achieve that status. Its representative reported that a joint proposal with ECD for assisting Tongan early childhood groups, developed in 1997, was unsuccessful, which was disappointing. However, ECD continues to support Utu Lelei and ako'anga Tonga through its other projects and contracts.

In 1998 Utu Lelei began work with a group of centres and trained supervisors on developing a Tongan curriculum framework based on Te Whāriki, the national early childhood curriculum framework, and extending it to include Tongan values of teaching and learning.

7. Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association (TTPOA/NZCA)

In the 1960s a group of women led by Sonja Davies was concerned about the quality of childcare in New Zealand; the group's lobbying resulted in the Government introducing the first official childcare regulations. This was the beginning of the New Zealand Childcare Association.

> In 1969 the association had arranged for childcare workers to sit the Royal Society of Health Certificate of Childcare from London which was supervised voluntarily by local association workers. During the 1970s the association was established by government at Wellington Polytechnic. In 1979 the Department of Social Welfare gave the association a grant to research field based training and the current training [programme] was established. (May, 1993, p. 348)

This field-based programme was again taught voluntarily in its early years and was initially a 2-year certification course, which for some people also included a 1-year introductory certificate. This eventually became a 3-year Certificate in Childcare worth 100 licensing points.

In 1990, at a conference at Otiria Marae, a commitment to the Tiriti o Waitangi was signed and NZCA changed its name to Te Tari Puna o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association.

In 1996 the association gained accreditation to deliver a Diploma of Teaching Early Childhood and in 1998 this course was approved for teacher registration purposes by the Teacher Registration Board.

NZCA's involvement with Pacific Islands early childhood education began in 1988 when, in association with PACIFICA Inc. (Pacific Women's Council) and with funding provided by the Pacific Islands Business Development Unit, it established field-based training for Pacific Islands early childhood educators. PACIFICA, in recognising the need for Pacific Islands women to be trained, had approached NZCA to extend its training to meet their specific needs. NZCA and PACIFICA thought that the field-based approach was a good way for the women to train as it allowed them to put their theory into practice as they trained and it enabled them to continue working in their centres. In order to maintain a cultural perspective, Pacific Islands lecturers were employed to train Pacific Islands women. This field-based training has been provided by TTPOA/NZCA for 10 years in Auckland, Wellington, and Tokoroa.

A total of 70 Pacific Islands students in the first intake graduated in 1990. From 1988 to 1996 approximately 300 students have graduated with TTPOA/NZCA's Certificate in Childcare. Pacific Islands students in Auckland, Wellington, and Rotorua are currently in the Diploma of Teaching (ECE) programme. (Statistics supplied by TTPOA/NZCA, personal communication, 20 July 1998). At the association's conference in May 1998, the first 3 Pacific Islands graduates received their Diplomas of Teaching (ECE).

The other arm of the organisation provides support and up-to-date information to its members which include Pacific Islands member centres. Links between TTPOA/NZCA and PACIFICA remain until the present day. PACIFICA holds a position on the national council and is also represented in the training team for the association. Another council member, through her work as a supervisor of a licensed centre, has been able to offer support and advice to PIECCs.

8. *Anau Ako Pasifika (AAP) (Home-based Pacific Islands Early Childhood and Parent Support Intervention Project)*

This project was established in 1988 in Auckland, Tokoroa, and Wellington and was funded until 1996 by the Netherlands-based philanthropic trust, the Bernard van Leer Foundation. Since 1996 it has been contracted by the Ministry of Education to provide home-based educational services to Pacific Islands families in New Zealand. The project has always encouraged parents to participate in their children's development and education, to get together with other parents, and to access centre-based early childhood education and care in the community. In fact, in 1995 ECD attributed the development of at least 25 PILGs and 3 licensed and chartered PIECCs to the work of Anau Ako Pasifika (AAP) with Pacific Islands parents (Mara et al., 1996).

Initially the project director and staff responded to requests from centres and playgroups to speak to parents to encourage their participation in the education of their children. They have had less time to do this recently, but the project still plays an important leadership, mentoring, and co-ordination role in the Pacific Islands early childhood education sector. The project is increasingly supplying a number of centres with learning and teaching resources (pictures, puzzles,

books, and cultural materials)—resources that are desperately needed by centres for their programmes.

Anau Ako Pasifika is also currently contracted by ECD to deliver PAFT programmes in West and Central Auckland.

9. SA'ASIA (Sosaiete A'oga Amata Samoa i Aotearoa)

Although SA'ASIA was not formally interviewed for this study, it is important that the largest Pacific Islands early childhood organisation and its role in supporting a'oga amata is included in this report. The following summary was submitted in writing by the current national president.

The organisation was established in Wellington in 1991. There are currently more than 60 a'oga amata in the association.

This national organisation is made up of 4 regional bodies: SAAFA in Auckland, SAFATA in Waikato, Asosi A'oga Amata i Ueligitone in Wellington, and Asosi A'oga Amata i le Motu i Saute in the South Island. Each regional body has its own president and secretary and has the obligation of running workshops for their teachers and parents.

The national presidency, which is a 3-year post, rotates from one regional body to another. Iole Tagoilelagi (from SAAFA) was the first president from 1992–95; the presidency is currently held by Fereni Ete, who is a member of the Wellington region.

The annual national conferences of the organisation are held in September or October every year.

Issues Raised by the Pacific Islands Early Childhood Organisations

The views and perspectives as expressed by the key informants from the various Pacific Islands associations in this study are collated under the following headings: what they report as achievements of their associations, the barriers to licensing and chartering as they see them, the factors that have been of assistance to licensing and chartering, and, lastly, their opinions on the challenges for the centres in the future.

Achievements

The associations acknowledge that there are now many more centres licensed and chartered and they see this increase as having been achieved largely by their own efforts through the following:

- Training more Pacific Islands early childhood teachers. There has been a substantial increase in the number of qualified graduates in Pacific Islands early childhood education.
- Language and culture—promoting Pacific Islands languages, training in these languages, and developing their own resources for teaching and learning.
- Securing property and obtaining finance for renovations and maintenance.
- Securing finance in preparation for licensing and for ongoing costs to maintain the centres long term.
- Being better able now to analyse the licensing and chartering processes, meet the needs, and articulate that—"we have the skills and knowledge about such things as funding formulae, occupancy agreements and many others".
- Meeting deadlines in terms of contracts, planning objectives and meeting them, building up our own development teamwork and co-operation, structures, and skills.
- Involving more men in Pacific Islands early childhood education.

- Delivering professional development training and workshops for centres and groups.
- Developing confidence and credibility, and awareness and information in Pacific Islands communities of the importance of early childhood education (although there is still further to go).
- Networking across groups and centres and involving parents, communities, and educators—a greater number of parents are becoming aware and getting involved.
- Beginning to document the process, writing about what is being done, more research and action research by Pacific Islands researchers, looking at overseas research and practice.
- Influencing and being visible through ECAC to the Ministry of Education and other agencies, acting as an effective lobby group, growing in credibility and acceptance at a national level, "in a political sense—we are here!"
- The development and completion of Pacific Islands unit standards with NZQA.
- Developing and extending Te Whāriki (the early childhood curriculum) into Pacific Islands cultural frameworks.
- Being successful at persevering despite setbacks and the failure to win contracts or secure extra funding, all in very difficult economic times for most Pacific Islands families and children.

Barriers and Difficulties

The associations interviewed identified a number of difficulties that exist both before and after licensing and chartering for groups and centres. Although these are identified and listed, it needs to be noted that many of these barriers had been overcome in order to gain licensed and chartered status. These barriers and difficulties are summarised and listed (in no order of priority):

- Funding: All of the associations reported lack of funding as the major barrier. For example, one key informant suggested that 4 times the present level of funding would be rèquired to license and charter quality centres.
- Fund-raising: As one informant said, "We [Pacific Islands communities] cannot escape fund-raising—we have to do it in all aspects of our lives: church, women's organisations, for groups, centres and schools—it is always there". Associated with this is the need to charge fees for attendance and to persuade parents to pay them.
- Strict regulations and requirements—and the strictly applied interpretations of these which do not take into consideration Pacific Islands cultural values, priorities, and preferred practices—which take time to resolve through a search for common ground. Some resentment and frustration was expressed by 2 of the key informants at having to "fit" a framework that is decided elsewhere.
- Gaining and sustaining parent involvement and commitment is difficult when there is a high turnover of parents using the centres, and there are high demands on parents on management and steering committees. Management training for parents on management committees, particularly in decision-making and consultation skills, and financial and employment management, is reported as a priority.
- The whole chartering process, including consultation, involvement, and the development of policies, is both complex and time consuming. Associations reported that it requires taking parents with them through the processes, at their speed, thereby ensuring a sense of ownership in the outcomes.

- Property/premises: Purchase agreements, occupancy agreements, sharing of premises, maintenance, resource management requirements, renovations, and compliance with specifications—these are all barriers a number of centres have had to overcome.
- Training and professional development needs still exist. Reports show that the supply of graduates in urban areas has been largely addressed, but more focused training and ongoing professional support is still very much needed to enhance quality provision for children. Another reported difficulty was the lack of sufficient financial support for trainees, many of whom face very real hardship with families to support. A need for further financial support for existing teachers to assist them to upgrade qualifications or gain professional development training was also reported.
- Receiving conflicting information from agencies—policies and regulations change so rapidly that centres find it hard to keep up with them, let alone meet them. Some associations feel they are not always consulted or considered in these changes.

Some Other Issues

A number of other practical issues, which only some of the organisations were concerned about, were raised by individual key informants. There was no indication of whose responsibility it was to address these, but some do relate to the responsibilities of management committees, particularly those relating to employment matters:

- Pay parity with primary teachers and the retention of trained, qualified staff who are "shoulder-tapped" by other early childhood education providers and schools.
- "Lack of understanding by Palagi" of the demands upon Pacific Islands people by their communities and the priority they wish for their languages and cultural values; the non-acceptance of Pacific Islands learning and teaching styles and pedagogy.
- Insufficient networking across the whole early childhood education sector with other organisations and providers for mutual support and professional sharing.
- "There are limits to our energy levels—we get very tired—the work is tough!"
- The fact that competition can actually work against co-operation and real development. One informant expressed the view that the Pacific Islands early childhood sector is too small and the needs of children and families are too big for organisations to be divided.

Factors That Assisted Licensing and Chartering

The associations reported that the centres have only achieved what they have so far because of assistance and support from the following:

- Total commitment by parents and communities.
- Trained and qualified Pacific Islands staff and support people to lead/manage the process.
- Committed and inclusive leadership at all levels.
- Funding and support received thus far.
- Pacific Islands personnel in the agencies, especially those who can speak Pacific Islands languages and can explain the required processes clearly.

Future Challenges for the Associations

Despite the present and ongoing challenges, the key informants from the associations reported that they expected a positive future if the following issues are faced and strategies developed to address them:

- All the Pacific Islands associations remain viable, credible, and work together co-operatively.
- Centres strive for higher levels of immersion in Pacific Islands languages, and achieve quality in this aspect of their services.
- Pacific Islands early childhood education trainees are trained in their own languages.
- The development and publication of full translations of all policies and documents.
- More detailed analysis—by each association—of needs across the entire Pacific Islands early childhood education sector before undertaking strategic planning.
- More effective policy strategic planning by associations and the Crown agencies.
- A re-evaluation by associations of what they are doing, why they are doing it, and where they are going.
- Further qualifications and training.
- Defining and working towards quality for themselves.

B: Key Informants from Licensed and Unlicensed Centres

Current Status of Sample

This part of the research was designed as an exploratory study of selected licensed and unlicensed centres. The intention was to describe the experiences of people in centres who were working towards, or had achieved, licensed and chartered status.

Barriers/Challenges

The following list includes barriers and challenges at pre- and post-licensing stages of development as described by the 11 informants:

Pre-licensing

- Premises and facilities were high on all centre lists and included funding for premises and facilities; the church and church organisation's requirements and attitudes; and working relationships with the hosts/owners of the buildings or site where the centre is located. Three centres (2 unlicensed and 1 licensed) mentioned the loss of trust, breakdown of communications, either interference or attempted domination by the host leadership and management, as barriers to progress and/or the ability to function as an autonomous centre.
- Funding—making applications, fund-raising, putting this on a more consistent or secure footing.
- Bringing families and communities along with the centre or group, at their pace but quickly enough for progress.
- Lack of trained, qualified staff.
- Lack of confidence about achieving all the requirements of documentation, regulations, and processes of licensing and chartering, and the exhaustion associated with the necessary work.

Post-licensing

Many of the issues are ongoing from pre-licensing as reported by this sample of informants from the 3 licensed and chartered centres and the one centre previously licensed.

- Property and premises, including maintenance and outlay for more equipment.
- Funding associated with buildings and acquiring resources and equipment for learning and teaching.
- Ongoing professional development and training of staff, and the upgrading of qualifications, in order to provide better programmes and learning resources for the children.
- Delays in getting qualifications recognised, and non-recognition of qualifications. (It was not clarified with informants whether this was a problem with NZQA or with the centre's management. Further research is needed in this area.)
- Developing management expertise (mainly for parents) on management committees about GST, PAYE, employment contracts, governance responsibilities, and relationships with supervisors and staff.
- Waiting lists and the demands of parents, along with the issue of charging fees to sustain the running of the centre (applied only in some areas).
- Initial communication breakdown with agencies, for example, getting to know whom to contact in an agency and clarifying the particular roles and types of support/information required from the agency and the responsibilities of centres in that regard.

Useful Supports and Services

The following supports and services were reported by this sample of informants from centres as sources of assistance in the licensing and chartering process and in helping them meet the needs of the children:

- The most helpful agency reported by both sets of centres was ECD in terms of funding, materials, workshops, planning, and having a facilitator from the same ethnic group.
- Ministry of Education discretionary funding was very helpful and acknowledged by all centres.
- A variety of support from the national Pacific Islands early childhood associations such as PIECCA and Utu Lelei.
- Host school/church organisation and its principal and board of trustees/minister and church council.
- Parents giving freely of their time, commitment, and assistance in fund-raising.
- Building and safety advice from local bodies and agencies.
- Local city councils and councillors who lobbied on behalf of centres, and informed them of processes and local body regulations.
- Ministry of Education officers responsible for licensing and chartering were also very helpful in directing centres to other agencies/support services.
- Education Review Office in its reviews and processes.
- Specialist Education Services: One centre acknowledged their invaluable help with meeting the educational needs of a special needs child.
- Local Health Authority/Health nurses for health checks of children.
- School Dental Service where centres based at schools were available for dental checks and dental health provision.

- Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association in terms of support and information, lobbying on behalf of centres, and setting up a Quality Centre Award.
- Colleges of education for professional development and support of staff (post-licensing) and the important links into training courses.

Views on the Differences Between Being Licensed and Unlicensed

This sample of informants from centres reported significant differences between being licensed and unlicensed. Unlicensed centres contemplated what changes would occur when they became licensed and chartered. One centre had directly experienced being unlicensed, licensed, then unlicensed again:

- Levels of awareness about learning, purposes, and direction are different—they are clearer when a centre is licensed.
- The ability, when licensed, to provide an all-day service and so give better quality service to parents and children.
- Staff are trained and paid for their work (unlicensed centres mentioned having trained and qualified staff in their group who were currently working for no pay which they thought was not "right").
- One informant shared being a supervisor in the playgroup, and returning after training to set up the same group as a licensed and chartered centre. She reported that through training (judging by her own experience) staff become reflective learners and teachers, knowing better how to plan for children's learning and provide quality programmes, interactions, and experiences for the children.
- There is a danger that parents and elders can become less involved as groups become more "formal", structured, and fee paying after licensing is achieved.
- Several reported that "improved" status in the eyes of the parents and the Pacific Islands communities was very important. Licensed centres are known to be "proper" early childhood centres which have clear guidelines of what is expected and are accountable to parents and the communities, which is very important.
- Several teachers mentioned increased access by parents, families, and children to "quality" early childhood education as an important outcome of being licensed and chartered.

Present and Future Needs

The centre informants shared in their interviews the kinds of tasks that lie before them and their challenges and needs for the future. None of the informants expressed an inability to meet the future challenges nor were they daunted by the future needs they described.

The licensed centres focused mainly on maintaining their provision by:

- Continuing to plan, set goals, and work with parents. (Sauvao, 1995, showed how parents could be involved in the teaching of children in a'oga amata).
- Continuing to promote, use, and support Pacific Islands philosophy of language and cultural learning and issues such as immersion, bilingual learning, and the use of dialects, and considering the place of the English language in centres.
- Keeping fees paid by parents manageable, as centres are aware that finance is beginning to be a factor in access to their services.

- Linking with other PIECCs and PILGs as mentors; linking with other providers such as kindergartens, playcentres, and childcare centres to gain ideas and offer support for Pacific Islands children and families in their groups.
- Wider use of "project teams" to help PILGs capitalise on the experience that they had already gained through contracts and expertise in the associations, and in the "older" centres.

Other concerns mentioned by informants included:

- Sharing of premises remains a challenge—2 centres reported considering leaving and setting up in their own separate premises, one having shared premises for over 10 years.
- The lack of follow-up of non-compliance by centres.
- Continued access to quality funding for ongoing development.
- The need (in some areas) for expansion of premises and provisions to meet the demand—all licensed centres reported large waiting lists, in fact one has started a playgroup next door to cater for some of the families demanding early childhood education in their language.
- The shortage of resources and support to fully implement Te Whāriki and the revised DOPs.

The main concern of 3 out of the 4 unlicensed centres which were still working towards licensing and chartering was to be able to continue to work towards the achievement of that status.

- One of the unlicensed centres which had lost its licence reported that for the present it wished to remain unlicensed. This centre saw its future challenge as gaining more substantial community and financial support before again embarking on the process of licensing and chartering, a possibility sometime in the future.
- The 2 remaining unlicensed centres had experienced a number of setbacks in the process which had daunted them but they were still hopeful of achieving all the requirements: one centre reported that it had been trying since 1993 to become licensed and chartered; the other reported it had started working towards licensing and chartering in 1990.
- The fourth unlicensed group/centre had no intention of becoming licensed and chartered. It intended always to exist to meet the needs that it was originally set up to serve—to give parents in the community "a break" and to provide the children with an opportunity to experience some "outside" stimulation. It had never intended to extend hours or services and it wished to remain supported by ECD.

Informants from individual centres also made the following comments about ways in which some of the above future needs could be met:

- by gaining more Ministry of Education contracts that involved a "needs analysis" and "development package" for centres,
- by ECD employing co-ordinators from the smaller Pacific Islands communities, and
- by keeping politicians and leaders informed about Pacific Islands communities' efforts, stressing the importance of early childhood education for later achievement.

As one informant said, "The needs are still there even though many of us have been working since the 1980s."

DISCUSSION

Main Issues Arising from the Study

An Overview

The limitations of this small-scale study have been outlined in the introduction. Many of the issues, concerns, challenges, and successes as documented from the small sample in the study require further investigation and "unpacking". One intention is that this report will encourage national Pacific Islands early childhood organisations, agencies, and centres to examine more closely the issues raised.

It is also important that a wider historical perspective be taken when the development of Pacific Islands early childhood education is examined, and in particular when considering the processes of licensing and chartering Pacific Islands centres. Prior to 1990 the Childcare Centre Regulations applied to the licensing of PIECCs. The previous Department of Education's Early Childhood Division had also worked with a number of Pacific Islands groups and organisations such as PACIFICA (Pacific Women's Council) and Anau Ako Pasifika, in an attempt to meet the needs of the newly emerging groups. It is interesting to note that there are some centres which were first formed in the 1980s and which are still actively working towards licensing and chartering status. The reasons for this length of time being taken are many and varied. It was always an aim of this report to show the depth of commitment that existed in the various Pacific communities over the years for better access to early childhood education in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

The relatively recent and positive initiatives by the various agencies are also recorded in this report; these efforts are welcomed and appreciated by the associations, key informants, and centres in this study. It is also important to note that the agencies when approached, and the individuals we spoke to, were very willing to share their experiences and to examine their own support and delivery to the PIECCs and PILGs that they deal with. Such positive responsiveness needs to be acknowledged.

Behind the data collected, however, and the work and commitment by all of the Pacific Islands communities and organisations, lies the reality of the low socioeconomic status of their families and the very high cultural and educational aspirations Pacific Islands parents and families have for their children. The barriers to licensing and chartering reported in this study must be placed in the context of these 2 key factors—low resources and high aspirations—if the identified challenges are to be appropriately and effectively met by all the agencies, associations, centres, families, and communities involved in Pacific Islands early childhood education.

Many of the families and supporters in the groups which are attempting to become licensed and chartered have put an inestimable amount of time, energy, spirit, and money into the whole process because they want the best educational opportunities for their children. When the hard-fought-for time finally arrives, and their group becomes a licensed and chartered centre, a new set of challenges and stresses emerges. The commitment that had sustained the group through the whole process up to that point must continue to be sustained. That load is considerable for many families.

PIECCs are like many other early childhood providers in that they experience a turnover of families and children. They build up, and lose (but also gain), expertise in a relatively short period

of time. In addition, however, they are still a relatively new group of providers compared with other early childhood education services which have a longer history of involvement and experience upon which to draw. This study reveals how, through funding, resourcing, and networking by agencies and organisations, this experience is growing. Any expectations put on PIECCs need to be placed in this context of growing confidence and expertise.

A further general point is that the licensing and chartering processes are facilitated by a number of different agencies (and different sections of these agencies) and organisations. Because of these complexities, there is a very small number of individuals who have a complete overview of the total situation of all PIECCs—their programmes, challenges, and aspirations for the future. The reasons for this vary. Findings from this study indicate that more effective communication of information and co-ordination would probably ameliorate this lack of overview.

Ongoing policy changes, links between research and policy, recent policy work on qualifications and the development of quality indicators, and professional development contracts—all these impact on the development of Pacific Islands early childhood services. It is therefore important that the national Pacific Islands early childhood organisations and all the Pacific Islands groups (Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Fijian, Tokelau, Tuvalu, and Cook Islands) and centres be included in ongoing discussions and co-ordination of these interconnected facets of development.

Some Common Perspectives and Views

This study has revealed some views that are held in common by the agencies, organisations, and centres concerning the licensing and chartering processes for PIECCs. Almost all groups of informants in the study made mention of the following issues: property, funding levels, fund-raising, ways to involve parents and communities, better co-ordination of policy and delivery of provisions, ongoing professional development of staff, support to management committees to improve their management of centres, effective delivery of the curriculum, meeting the requirements of regulations, and achieving desirable objectives and practices. A more extensive study by the agencies, organisations, and centres themselves would identify more specifically (for them) the nature of these issues and how they could be addressed.

Some Differences in Perspectives and Views

One particular viewpoint, which differed from most others, questioned whether in fact all PILGs should be encouraged to become licensed and chartered. Since licensed and chartered centres appeared to get more support, funding, trained staff, and higher status, should they then become the benchmark for all Pacific Islands early childhood education provisions? PILGs, it was contended, could have their own "measures" or benchmarks of quality so that parents could choose that particular service with a level of assurance. PILGs meet the needs of some parents and families because of their informal nature, the fact that fees are not required, shorter or more flexible hours, and so on.

The other, more widely held view was that licensed and chartered centres are required to reach certain levels of operation and delivery which are externally reviewed and recognised. On this basis, parents and the Government can be assured of acceptable standards of quality, through a centre's having achieved the licensing standard. It was argued that, for this reason, groups should be encouraged to become licensed and chartered. One informant from a national organisation

speculated on the creation of a more transitional arrangement between being a PILG and a fully licensed and chartered centre so that a number of characteristics of both could be retained. She believed that PILGs, with some augmentation, could still provide a level of quality of provision for the children and their parents without having to embark on the full process which could take years.

There was no clear indication given by informants in this study whose responsibility it is to attend to centres' needs. Clearly, there are particular aspects that relate to providers (management, staff, and parents), national organisations, and agencies. Policy, implementation of policy, funding, managerial and professional support, training of Pacific Islands early childhood educators, delivery of the national curriculum, and resource development for the maintenance of Pacific Islands languages and culture, all appear to be the sole responsibility of particular agencies, national organisations, and centres themselves.

The reality is that many of the responsibilities and areas of involvement overlap. One of the objects of this report was to set down the roles and responsibilities of each of the agencies and organisations and so illustrate these interrelationships. In addition, some of the differences in perception, information, and views between groups may be due to differences in terminology or a lack of agreement about meanings and interpretations. A lack of understanding and information about differing roles and responsibilities may exist as well. If so, how perceptions facilitate or impede co-ordination should be considered.

Diversity and differences need to be valued. However, potential fragmentation across the Pacific Islands early childhood education sector, in terms of general direction and overall aims, was mentioned by a number of informants. Division and a lack of co-ordination would only be averted, they claimed, if a level of co-operation and understanding was sought and achieved by all agencies, organisations, and centres. For example, one agency believed that contractual processes could undermine the sharing of information and expertise, whereas an informant from another agency thought the contractual process was positive because it had built up expertise in the Pacific Islands communities. These views are not contradictory—there are different perspectives on any process, depending on one's role, responsibilities, and level of involvement with Pacific Islands children and their families.

Two informants expressed concern about the transition to school of Pacific Islands children, and how the compulsory sector of education is meeting their learning needs as they move out of Pacific Islands early childhood services and into schools.

Views on Quality, Choice, and Access

These terms are all highly "contested", particularly when they pertain to PIECCs.

Who Defines Quality?

At present the ERO reviews Pacific Islands centres according to legislative requirements that apply to all early childhood providers. The Office has published booklets pertaining to what counts as quality in childcare (1996), kindergartens (1997b), kohanga reo (1997c), and playcentres (1998). It could produce another in its series of booklets sometime in the future which would focus on PIECCs.

However, the question of who defines quality is an area that all groups in this study referred to, although many with caution. Most said that "quality" as it applies to PIECCs must be more widely debated, be subject to wider consultation, and be clarified so that it is expressed in terms

of what it means for Tongan, Samoan, Niue, Cook Islands, and all the other Pacific Islands groups of centres. Most informants mentioned the concept of quality in terms of future development because they believed that Pacific Islands parents and communities wanted and expected quality provision for their children's learning and development.

How To Choose?

The subject of choice for Pacific Islands parents also needs further discussion. This study confirmed that urban families tend to have more choice of early childhood services than do rural families. Current statistics reveal there has been a move away from the PILGs, and parents are choosing either kindergartens or childcare centres. However, anecdotal reports of waiting lists and families travelling across cities to attend a PIECC of their own cultural background need to be looked at more closely to find out how parental choice is actually operating.

Currently, choice for Pacific Islands parents who want their children to attend a centre that provides specifically for their own ethnic language and cultural background is restricted to the 150 PILGs and the 40 licensed and chartered centres which are located across the whole country. There are also community differences—the widest "choice" exists for parents who want their children to go to licensed a'oga amata as they are the most numerous. For Cook Islands parents, for example, there are only 7 (nationally) licensed and chartered punanga reo to choose from.

Lastly, when parents choose a licensed and chartered centre they know that the centre has met standards of quality, comparable with all other early childhood education providers. Many Pacific Islands parents are choosing to send their children to kindergartens and childcare centres; the reasons for their choices could readily form the basis of another study.

At present, in its early childhood education statistics, the Ministry of Education includes licensed PIECCs in the category "Childcare Centres". Without separate statistics being kept, it is difficult to extract specific information on choice or access to these centres by Pacific Islands children and their families, and difficult to monitor trends in the future. A separate ongoing category for Pacific Islands early childhood (licensed) centres should be established as in 1993 (*see* table 1).

The Issue of Access

The Ministry of Education's own plan for Pacific Islands education, *Ko e Ako 'a e Kakai Pasifika* (1996), includes the specific goal of increasing the number of children enrolled across all early childhood services (including PIECCs), with targeted assistance aimed at increasing the participation of Pacific Islands children. There have been increases and a wider range of provision. The trend is for increases in enrolments in mainstream services, not PILGs. Once again, factors relating to access require some closer examination in terms of the kinds of provision the Government is funding. Research on home-based early childhood provisions and parental education and development initiatives (which aim to increase parent confidence and participation in their children's learning and development) has demonstrated that parents often choose to move out of the home situation to access centre or community-based early childhood services (for example, Mara et al., 1996). A closer examination of this process may give a greater understanding of both access and participation trends in the Pacific Islands communities.

Future Directions

In summary this report has attempted to collect and present information from the range of agencies and organisations that work together to establish and support the licensing and chartering of PIECCs in Aotearoa-New Zealand. In terms of the future directions much will depend upon the following:

- To what extent the national Pacific Islands early childhood organisations can co-ordinate, consolidate, and engage in a level of strategic planning that will take the whole sector forward.
- How well the national organisations can build and strengthen links with all the agencies and the level of influence they can exert on politicians, policy makers, and the agencies to develop policies and resources that will enhance quality, access, choice, and participation for Pacific Islands parents and communities.
- The levels of funding and resourcing that can be accessed from Government or elsewhere.
- The inclusion of all Pacific Islands early organisations and stakeholders in any reviews on quality indicators, qualifications, and professional development and training, or policy development such as quality indicators.
- To what extent Pacific Islands early childhood education remains as part of and linking across the total early childhood education sector whilst retaining its identity and meeting the specific needs of Pacific Islands children and their families.
- The extent to which PIECCs (with appropriate support) successfully promote, implement, and maintain through training, professional leadership, management, curriculum delivery, and interactions with their children, their own languages and cultural values such that a firm foundation of identity, self-esteem, and desire for lifelong bicultural learning is established.

Suggestions for Further Research

In consultation with members of the Advisory Committee of this project, the following topics for further research are suggested in relation to PIECCs:

- ☐ a larger study with a more representative sample of centres
- ☐ a more in-depth examination of the following:
  - property issues
  - adequacy of funding for equity and access to provisions
  - adequacy of funding for management, training, and support
  - further examination of the issues of choice, participation, and access
  - the provision of resources including translations of documents and regulations
  - professional development of staff
  - special education needs and services
  - management issues pertaining to governance and statutory obligations
  - regulations, development of the framework, and compliance issues
  - sharing of support and advice
  - communication issues
  - the issue of accountability.

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APPENDIX 1: TERMINOLOGY

Set out below are definitions—provided by the Ministry of Education—of terms used in the body of this report.

Early Childhood Centre
Defined by section 308(1) of the Education Act 1991 as any premises used (exclusively, mainly, or regularly) for the education or care of 3 or more children (not being the children of the persons providing the education or care) under 6 years of age.

Person Responsible
Defined by the Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1998 (ECE Regs 1998) as any person directly involved in, and primarily responsible for, the day to day care, comfort, education, health and safety, of the children in their care. The person must have a qualification that is recognised by the Secretary of Education (regulations 38 and 39).

Management
Defined by section 308(1) of the Education Act 1991 as:

(a) in relation to an early childhood centre, means the person or people having control of the centre; and
(b) in relation to a care arranger, means the care arranger.

Early Childhood Service
An inclusive term used by the Ministry of Education to apply to all licensed and/or chartered early childhood groups (centre-based and home-based)—it includes home-based networks, childcare centres, playcentres, kohanga reo, kindergartens, PIECCs, irrespective of philosophy or legal ownership (i.e., privately operated or community based).

Licensee
Defined by the ECE Regs 1998 as the holder of a licence of an early childhood service. A licensee is not required to hold a qualification recognised by the Secretary of Education but is required to ensure a fit and proper person is responsible. The licensee is required to ensure the licensed early childhood centre meets all requirements of the ECE Regs 1998 at all times it is operating.

Licensing Process
The legal process whereby premises are approved by the Ministry of Education as meeting the requirements of the ECE Regs 1998 and thereby able to legally operate as an early childhood centre. The licence is granted to specific premises and not to the licensee. All premises are inspected to ensure all requirements are met before a licence is granted. Licensed centres, with the exception of kohanga reo, do not attract Ministry of Education funding. They are, however, if fee-charging services, eligible for the childcare fee subsidy administered by the Department of Social Welfare. This fee subsidy ceases when children are eligible to enrol in school, i.e., at the age of 5 years. However, the subsidy continues if a child remains at the centre for his/her 5th year and has identified special education needs.

Licence-exempt Playgroups and Pacific Islands Language Groups (PILGs)
Required to meet Government-approved criteria which were published in the *NZ Gazette*. They are administered, supported and funded, where eligible, by the Early Childhood Development service. Some playgroups work towards becoming licensed, while others choose to remain as playgroups.

Licence-exempt Kohanga Reo
Required to be identified by having their names published in the *NZ Gazette*. They are administered, and supported, by Te Kohanga Reo National Trust.

Licence-exempt Mobile Kindergartens
These kindergartens do not operate out of licensed premises. Their names have been published in the *NZ Gazette* as being exempt from having to meet licensing requirements. They are, however, chartered and receive Ministry of Education funding which may be based on a notional roll. Under-2s may attend but funding is paid at the over-2-year-old rate. Kindergarten associations administer mobile kindergartens.

Informal Home-based Services
These can operate without meeting any requirements as long as no more than 2 children attend the home of a caregiver at any one time. If 3 or more children attend the premises regularly, the premises would then be required to be licensed as an early childhood centre. Another option could include the caregiver becoming part of a chartered home-based network.

Chartered Home-based Services
If a service wishes to receive Government funding or to be recognised by the Ministry of Education, the service must become a chartered service. As the homes are not licensed, the Ministry of Education has no authority to enter them. The Education Review Office does, however, have such an authority. Statutory declarations are required from the organisation that confirm each home of the service meets the Education (Home-Based Care) Order 1992, Code of Practice. Chartered home-based services are also able to access the Department of Social Welfare's childcare fee subsidy for their parents (*see* Licensing Process).

Chartering Process
This is an undertaking by the management of an early childhood service to the Ministry of Education that it will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the service is managed in accordance with the objectives and practices in the charter document. The charter contains the principles gazetted as the Revised Early Childhood Education Charter Guidelines: A Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices (1996). In return, the service becomes eligible to receive Ministry of Education early childhood funding. Services choose whether to charter or not; it is not mandatory. An early childhood service must be licensed before a charter agreement will be considered. Licensing and chartering are 2 quite separate processes.

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APPENDIX 2: LISTS

Agencies and Organisations

The Ministry of Education
Early Childhood Development
New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Education Review Office
Specialist Education Services

Pacific Islands Early Childhood Council Aotearoa (PIECCA)
PIECCA Training
Te Punanga o te Reo Kuki Airani o Aotearoa Inc.
A'oga Amata Training Institute, Wellington
Kautaha Aoga Niue
Utu Lelei
Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/ New Zealand Childcare Association
Anau Ako Pasifika Project

Members of the Advisory Committee

- Bernadette Ah Voa Eteuati, PIECCA
- Ann Dickason, Ministry of Education
- Taonefoou Ogotau Falesima, Kautaha Aoga Niue Inc. (Niue Early Childhood Association Inc)
- Salā Edna Faleto'ese, Ta'ita'i Pasifika, Early Childhood Development
- Lia Mapa, Research Assistant, New Zealand Council for Educational Research
- Diane Mara, Researcher, New Zealand Council for Educational Research
- Dr Val Podmore, Senior Researcher and Group Leader, Early Childhood Education, New Zealand Council for Educational Research
- Jan Taouma, Council Member Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association
- Mere Tepaeru Tereora, National President Te Punanga ote Reo Kuki Airani o Aotearoa Inc.
- Lesieli Tongati'o, Pule Maata Pasefika, Chief Adviser Pacific Islands Education, Ministry of Education

Support is also acknowledged from
- Fereni Eti, Director A'oga Amata Training Institute, Wellington
- Feaua'i Burgess, Lecturer in Early Childhood Education, Wellington College of Education
- Teupoko Morgan, Executive Director, Anau Ako Pasifika Project, Tokoroa

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

GATHERING DATA ON POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

(Ministry of Education, ECDU, SES, NZQA, ERO, National Pacific Is ECE organisations, Key Individual Informants)

(Record details separately on name of organisation, position of interviewee)

1. How long has your organisation been associated with Pacific Islands Early Childhood Centres (PIECCs) and the process of licensing and chartering ?

2. How long have you been associated with PIECCs?

3. Your involvement or the involvement of your organisation has been within a policy or set of initiatives for PIECCs - what are these policies or initiatives?
   (Agencies only) OR
   What have been the main areas of involvement of you/your organisation in the licensing and chartering of PIECCs? *(P.Is Organisations, key informants only)*

4. What specific services or support does your organisation provide for PIECCs ?
   (Agencies only) OR
   What have been the main successes in terms of your/your organisation's services and support to PIECCs? *(P.Is Organisations, key informants only)*

5. In your experience/those of your organisation, what have been the main barriers to the licensing and chartering of PIECCs since 1989? (for example, funding, qualifications and training, buildings/facilities, transport, safety and health issues, etc).

6. In your experience, what has helped centres to become licensed and chartered?

7. What have you/your organisation learned from this process?

8. What progress has there been towards the achievement of more licensed and chartered PIECCs since 1989?

9. What will facilitate or obstruct the future development of PIECCs, in your opinion?

10. What will facilitate or obstruct your/your organisation's support of the PIECCs in the future?

11. What are your views about the future development of PIECCs?

12. How do you see your ideas for future development being put into practice or achieved?

13. Are there any further comments or information about licensing and chartering of PIECCs which you would like to contribute before concluding?

GATHERING DATA FROM TWO GROUPS OF CENTRES

(i.e., not yet licensed/chartered; licensed/chartered)

1. How long have you been working towards licensing?/How long has your centre been licensed?

2. At what stage of that process are you currently?/When did you first start working towards that status?

3. What support and services have been available to you, or received by your centre, during the process of becoming licensed and chartered?

4. What services and kinds of support have you found most helpful to your centre?

5. From your experiences, what are the main differences between being a playgroup and becoming a licensed centre?

6. What needs to be done in your centre to reach the goal to be licensed and chartered? *(Unlicensed only)*

7. What have been the major barriers to becoming fully licensed and chartered?

Looking back at the process of becoming licensed and chartered some things may have become easier to deal with, and some more difficult. *(Licensed centres)*

8. What were the easiest things to deal with?

9. What were the most difficult things you had to deal with?

10. What were your main challenges when you first became licensed and chartered?

11. What continue to be your main challenges as a licensed centre?

12. What are your overall aims and hopes for your centre? *(Both groups)*

13. How will these aims be achieved? *(Both groups)*

14. Are there any other comments you would like to make about your centre's experiences either in the process of becoming licensed and chartered or, after becoming licensed and chartered? *(Both groups)*

APPENDIX 4: FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT REPORT

Collating the Feedback

When the final draft of this report was completed, the key informants from the agencies, associations, and centres were given the opportunity to comment on the report before final writing and editing. Not all the agencies, associations, and centres were able to meet with the writer of the report; a number of those who were not, sent in written comments. It was made known to the informants that a summary of the feedback would be written and included in the final report.

The feedback itself was semi-structured in that 3 questions were posed to the informants as probes for comment:

1. Do you think this report in terms of content is of use for your future work/involvements? If so, in what ways?
2. What do you see for the future of PIECCs ?
3. What would be your priorities for further research?

The informants were invited to structure their responses based on the above questions if they wished. Some of the responses therefore were restricted to these questions, but most were not. The responses were collated and were not attributed to specific informants.

Centres and national organisations that were part of the feedback process reported that their comments and involvements had been accurately recorded in the report.

Documenting the Past

All the informants (agencies, national organisations, and centres which responded) thought that the report was a useful starting point as it pulled together the various viewpoints and themes. As one informant from a national Pacific Islands organisation said, the report "sets the scene and provides a framework". She also commented on how the report, in documenting some historical background, has placed the development of PIECCs in a context. She believes it is important to know that history so her people can move forward into the future. The opinion of the informant was that there have always been concerns and issues about evolving into licensed and chartered centres and this document articulates these.

A further written comment from another national organisation was:

> As a first compilation of Pacific Islands early childhood education development, [the document] will be of great value to Pacific Islands language groups. Perspectives for future development can be drawn from the document and further discussed from a sector's point of view.

Looking to the Future

All informants said they were confident about the future development of PIECCs. One informant said that the prospect of more development contracts and renegotiations of present contracts is very encouraging.

> The more support centres can get the better . . . this contestable funding concept is really excellent. The more providers we have, the better it is.

In terms of future directions, one informant from an agency posed the question:

> Where to from here in regard to early childhood immersion services?

The informant reported that centres are working hard fostering their particular home languages, but expressed concern about what would happen to the children as they moved into schools. He cautioned that unless there is a big push soon into bilingual education in primary schools (in addition to what is happening in South Auckland), students and Pacific Islands parents may not see the value of learning their own Pacific languages at the early childhood level.

> It is probably time for a school provision (such as Kura Kaupapa Maori for Maori) to be set up by the Samoan groups in Auckland.

One criticism of the report from a national Pacific Islands organisation was that there were no recommendations made at the end of the report. It commented that recommendations would have been useful for future policy development.

Future Research

All informants thought that the suggestions for future research listed under "Future Directions" in the discussion section of the report covered most of the relevant issues and areas. Priority was given by 2 informants from an agency to the provision of special educational services in PIECCs and to research into professional development in centres. They saw these areas as significant for future development and provision. Two additional suggestions from an agency for future research were:

- A longitudinal study following children from PIECCs right through their education to ascertain the importance of early childhood education for later achievement.
- A study on the transition to school of children from the centres.

Meeting with Ministry of Education Staff

Near the deadline set for the feedback process we met with officials from policy and operations sections of the Ministry of Education. This was valuable as a final check on information collected in the interviews and clarification of terms in the report. As a result of this meeting, Merren Dobson, Senior Adviser (Early Childhood Education) in the Ministry, developed the terminology section which is included near the end of the report. The assistance from the Ministry of Education, co-ordinated by Lesieli Tongati'o, Chief Adviser, Pacific Islands Education, is gratefully acknowledged.

Greater Co-ordination and Co-operation

Initially the intention for the feedback stage had been to invite all the agencies together in one group and all the national organisations and centre representatives together in another, for comment on the final draft. Unfortunately, time constraints and the fact that people were all very busy made it impossible to achieve this. This report has described how a number of different agencies and organisations contribute to the licensing and chartering processes. The fact remains that a level of co-ordination and consistency, including more information sharing, across the

agencies and associations (which is happening in a limited way), is important. We had hoped this could be possible in a limited way in the feedback phase of this research.

A greater degree of co-ordination between agencies, national associations, and centres (together with some increase in funding) would certainly assist PIECCs not only in meeting the standards required, but also in moving beyond that to provide high-quality services for Pacific Islands children and their families. They deserve nothing less.